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September 1992

Making the Move From
Computer to Cart—

Dungeon Master
Comes to the
SNES

Show Recaps:
Tokyo Toy Show
CES

Behind the
Scenes at
Nick Arcade

New Wizardry
Preview

MAPS AND TIPS:

*The Legend of Zelda—
A Link to the Past*, Part I



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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Once the best-selling game for the Atari ST computer, *Dungeon Master* has inspired several clone games. Turn to page 38 for a full review of the new Super NES version by JVC.

Cover Art: Mike Wepplo

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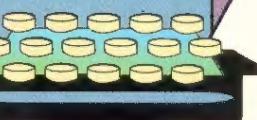
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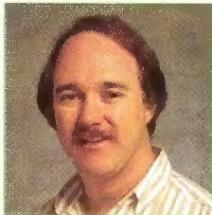
are taking the game show where

it's never gone before.

Of course, you can't ignore our regular features; *News Bits*, *Gaming on the Go* and our comprehensive reviews and strategies are still in here. For example, *Zelda* fanatics can benefit from Clayton Walnum's advice on *Zelda III*, which starts in this issue.

as we find the weather outside gradually turning colder—summer is almost over, sorry to say—VG&CE has come up with some great reasons for you to stay inside where it's warmer. We've got some exciting features in the magazine this month, and in a second I'll tell you what is coming up for the October issue that you won't want to miss.

We kick off with a special look at Mike Davila's recent trip to Japan for the Tokyo Toy Fair. It's a fact that much of the software that comes to America starts in Japan, so we'll be showing you some products that may be in your hands soon. Of course, importers could get it to you sooner, if you don't mind working around the Japanese that fills most of these games' screens and documentation.



In May, the staff of VG&CE attended the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. There was a lot of activity there, both on cartridge and disk, that pushes the envelope of what the hardware can do. Dave Moskowitz and John Schnyder have put their heads and word processors together to bring you the show's highlights.

Dave will also give you an early look at *Wizardry 7*. It's a wonderful addition to the *Wizardry* series.

Finally, I took a trip to Florida's Nickelodeon Studios to visit the set of *Nick Arcade*, a TV game show with a wild twist. The producers are

What you are seeing with this issue is the *subtle* change in the fabric of **VIDEO-GAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT Magazine** that I spoke about in this space last month. They are not what I would call major changes, but, rather, a constant striving to *improve* the magazine—to make it more what you want and rely on for game information. Send your comments to our offices at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, and tell us if you think we're doing okay.

Before I split for this month, I'd like to spill the beans on our next issue. Not only will we be giving you a detailed look at the new *Sonic* games that Sega will bring out soon, but we'll be featuring a special premium on our cover: a hologram of Sonic and his new pal, Tails. It's bound to be a collector's item, and, to use a cliché, you'll want to be the first on your block to have one. Don't miss out.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor



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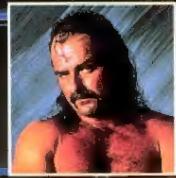
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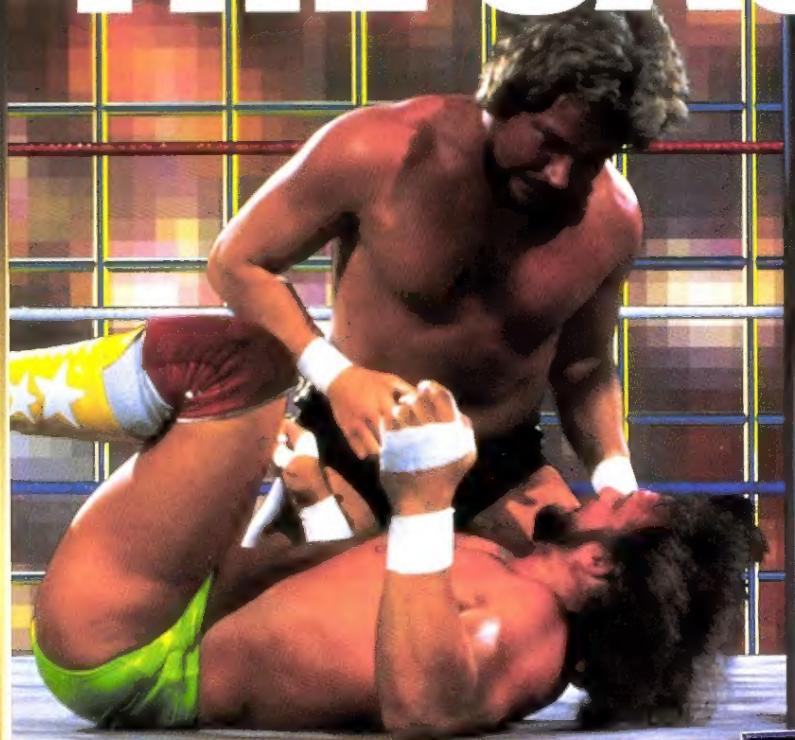


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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY:

“The Turbo Touch 360 is the first significant technology break-through in video games in the last 4 years.”

—Bill Kunkel, renowned video game editor and reviewer.
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“This is the greatest controller I’ve ever used. It puts me in the game and makes me a participant in the action. I’m getting higher scores than I ever have.”

—Robert Gennett, Semi Finalist, Nintendo World Championship,
Albany, New York

“I’m tired of treating teenagers for thumb injuries caused by playing video games. Your new product should be considered a blessing to game players, parents and doctors, alike. I salute you.”

—Dr. Robert Grossman, Spring Lake, New Jersey

“83% of game players tested preferred the Turbo Touch 360 to the existing controller. This is a very impressive “win” for a product in video game marketing research.”

—Karl Weigl, Baker Restaino Schumann Research,
Mill Valley, California

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A GENESIS FOR THE GENESIS

I am a video gamer from the days when *Pong* was an electronic marvel. It is a hobby in which my whole family can participate. I have an Atari 2600, Intellivision, NES, Game Boy, SNES and, unfortunately, a Genesis.

It is the Genesis that is the problem. I bought a Genesis several years ago when I found out that *Populous*—a game that I really wanted to try—was coming out for it, and I was not in the least disappointed. However, when I bought the Genesis, I also purchased an over-the-counter exchange warranty. In 1991, the Genesis developed a problem, and, rather than ship it off to be fixed, I exchanged it. The new system came with *Sonic the Hedgehog*, which was okay, I thought. Until I tried my beloved *Populous*.

I am sure you know what happened. I called Sega, only to be told, "It's not our problem." So I called Electronic Arts and found out that sure, I could exchange the game for another one—for \$20, which is in addition to the \$49.99 originally paid. Pay \$69.99 for a second-choice game? Ouch.

Perhaps I am ignorant of the logic of video-game manufacturing, but since my cartridge, booklet and box are all clearly marked "Licensed by Sega for play on the Sega Genesis," and Sega is the one who made the modification, doesn't the responsibility for this fiasco rest with them?

There is nothing wrong with wanting to make a dollar—or several million—but when it is done at the expense of those of us who innocently purchase a product, it seems fraudulent to me. I have to wonder why there was not more

publicity about this. Had I known, I would have proceeded differently. Now I read in another magazine that the same situation is happening with two Genesis games by Ballistic (Accolade).

Sorry, Sega. My Genesis sits gathering dust.

I predict that there will eventually be another video-game crash. Only this one, instead of being caused by too many generic games flooding the market, will be caused by bickering between the manufacturers and the licensees. Video gaming has matured over the years. If only the companies would.

—Lisa F. Smith
Merced, California

Your points are all well taken, and, as Andy Eddy noted in a recent editorial, the business side of electronic gaming does often get in the way. Console manufacturers want to make sure that they are compensated for all the hard work required to get their particular machine out.

That usually means that lockout chips and all sorts of patented, proprietary processes will be put in place to lessen the likelihood that unauthorized companies will release compatible software—at least, not without a fight. That's where Sega and Accolade are currently.

*With regard to the nonworking *Populous* cartridge you have, we contacted EA and got the following information: The games that don't work on the new revision of the Genesis (the systems that either*

*come with Sonic the Hedgehog or no game at all) are *Populous*, *Budokan* and *Zany Golf*. If you call EA's customer support line ([415] 572-2787), they will tell you how to exchange the cart(s) you have for replacement—there are some carts you can trade even-up and others you have to pay the difference on. The \$20 charge is only on defective carts past the 90-day warranty.*



ALL PACKED (IN) AND READY TO GO

I have heard rumors that Nintendo is going to stop including *Super Mario World* with the SNES, and replace it with *Street Fighter II* upon its completion. Is this true?

Also, I enjoy reading your magazine greatly, but I think I would like it better if you would go out on a limb more often and print more rumors instead of waiting forever to print confirmed information. I realize that your magazine is aimed at an older audience, but the majority of gamers are young and they are switching to many of your competitors because they take risks and have guts.

—Elliot Everhart
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Let's address your last issue first. The editors of VG&CE have long ago determined that printing rumors is a

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waste of precious space. It's hard enough for us to determine what to print and what to cut (because of space constraints), so printing stories that might not be true would just take away from our ability to give you real and verified information. That means that you can trust us, and that's what a long-term relationship is built on, right?

Also, to correct you, VG&CE isn't aimed at an older audience—our primary readership is between 11 and 17—but, rather, we feel the format we use is less insulting to our readers than to fill every square inch with flash and fireworks. We get letters to support this every day, but, as we've said before, we'd rather print those that deal with game issues than endless "You guys are great..." comments. We opt for substance. You pick VG&CE up for game news, not innuendo, so that's what we give you. Taking risks? What does that accomplish for the readers, other than filling up their eyes with stories that may never come true? As we said, printing rumors wastes space and angers people if they aren't correct. We aim higher. We do intend to start a column that will offer serious previews; but rumors just aren't our bag. Sorry.

We must be doing okay because you turned to VG&CE for the real story on Street Fighter II—and we won't disappoint you. The rumor that Street Fighter II will be packaged with the SNES is not at all true. Both Capcom and Nintendo deny that Street Fighter II will be a pack-in for the SNES; in fact, it has never even been a consideration. The only two current configurations of the SNES are including Super Mario World or with no game at all. Hope this answers your questions.

When you reviewed the game SFII, you said nothing about the grip of the game controller. I was wondering if using the regular SNES controller made the game any more difficult. The reason I ask is because a controller made just for the game will be released at the same time as the game. If you found it extremely difficult to use the regular controller, I think I should be also saving for the special controller.

—John Capito
Johnson City, Tennessee

Mike Davila responds: The joystick, named the Capcom Fighter Power Stick, unfortunately, won't be released until at least September, and its release may run even later. Capcom is making some beneficial changes to the design (to make it different from the Japanese version), and this has pushed the product release later than hoped. However, from our early looks at the joystick, it's obvious that it will be a benefit to playing Street Fighter II. Keep in mind that you can certainly play SFII with just a control pad, but the joystick does provide a certain control edge.

SNK continues to state that rentals are a plus. "The demand for video-game rentals has increased," Pamela Kelly, SNK's director of marketing, told us. "Being aggressive [in rental markets] makes the Neo-Geo accessible to everybody." Given the Neo-Geo's high price tag, the lower cost of renting makes it more likely that the system will find its way into more people's homes—even just temporarily.

Here are the answers to your other questions, Mark:

1) The letters SNK stand for Shin Nihon Kikaku, which is Japanese for "New Japanese Project." Anata wa wakarimasu ka? (That means, "Do you understand?")

2) All those types of games are being worked on, but you'll have to keep your eyes on VG&CE for further developments as they occur. SNK doesn't want to give away too much too soon.

3) A CD player is in the works, with a tentative release of 1993. Again, VG&CE will keep you up on new developments.

4) That's the easiest one. You can write to SNK at 20603 Earl St., Torrance, CA 90503. ☺



BRAND NEO QUESTIONS

I am very pleased that you are going to beef up your coverage on SNK's Neo-Geo system. I don't own one, but I'm thinking of getting one.

In a previous issue of your magazine, it was stated that SNK wants rentals. Do they still favor rentals? I hope so, because that's one of the main factors that will lean me toward getting one.

I also have a few questions regarding the Neo-Geo:

- 1) What does SNK stand for?
- 2) Will there be adventure, role-playing, wrestling and a *Super Mario* clone?
- 3) Is SNK working on a CD player?
- 4) What is SNK's address?

—Mark Price

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

CORRECTION

In the May 1992 issue, we printed a picture from an early version of Absolute Entertainment's *Race America* (Video-Game Reviews, page 46). Absolute sent us a new screen shot to reflect the actual release version, so buyers wouldn't be confused when their game looked different. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.



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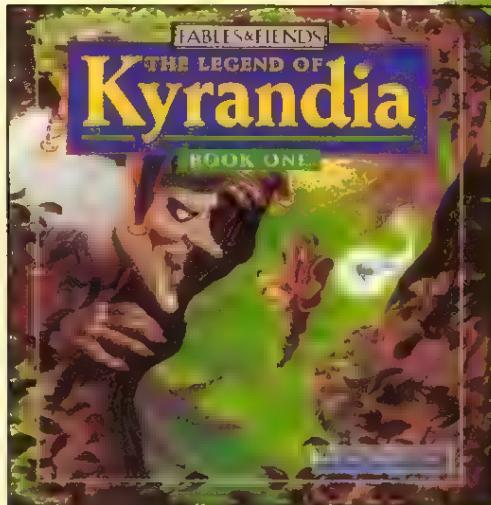
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CIRCLE #128 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? **VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT** has designed **Tip Sheet** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem with a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

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Attn: **Tip Sheet**



In the Williams arcade game *Terminator 2—Judgment Day*, how can I safely protect John Connor during the side-scrolling truck scene? Concentrating mainly on the airships doesn't seem to be too effective and neither does focusing on the terminators—it's too easy to accidentally shoot up the truck. What strategy is the best for this level?

—Tim Melnarik
Covina, California

Obviously, the best way to get through this stage is to play the game with two players—one can shoot at the Hunter-Killer planes and the other can pick off the terminators that run across the screen in front of the truck. But if you're taking on this challenging game by yourself, here are a few pointers:

First, be sure to blow open the boxes on the ground to power-up your weapon before the truck takes off. Concentrate on the Hunter-Killer planes as soon as they appear—the terminators are more of a danger to you than they are to Connor and the truck. When you do shoot at the terminators, aim for their kneecaps. They can be cut

down fairly quickly this way, and, if you miss, your shots will mostly go under the truck without hitting it. (Interestingly, the pickup's tires don't seem to be very susceptible to this type of damage.)

If you make it through this stage on the first try without losing the truck, you'll get a 500,000-point bonus. For other hot tips on the T2 coin-op, see last issue's Destination Arcadia column.





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In addition to using good old-fashioned brute force on a host of stone-age critters, you'll have to use a little CroMagnon grey matter to solve puzzles as you weave your way through five challenging levels including a scary cave, an Ice Age, a hazardous water world and even a dinosaur graveyard.

For pricing and orders, please call 800-VRG-INO7. Visa, Mastercard, American Express and checks accepted.

SEGA
GENESIS
16 BIT CARTOON

DEVELOPED BY
CORE DESIGN LTD.

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In the NES game *Mission: Impossible* by Ultra, can you help me get out of the Ghost Temple in Area 3?

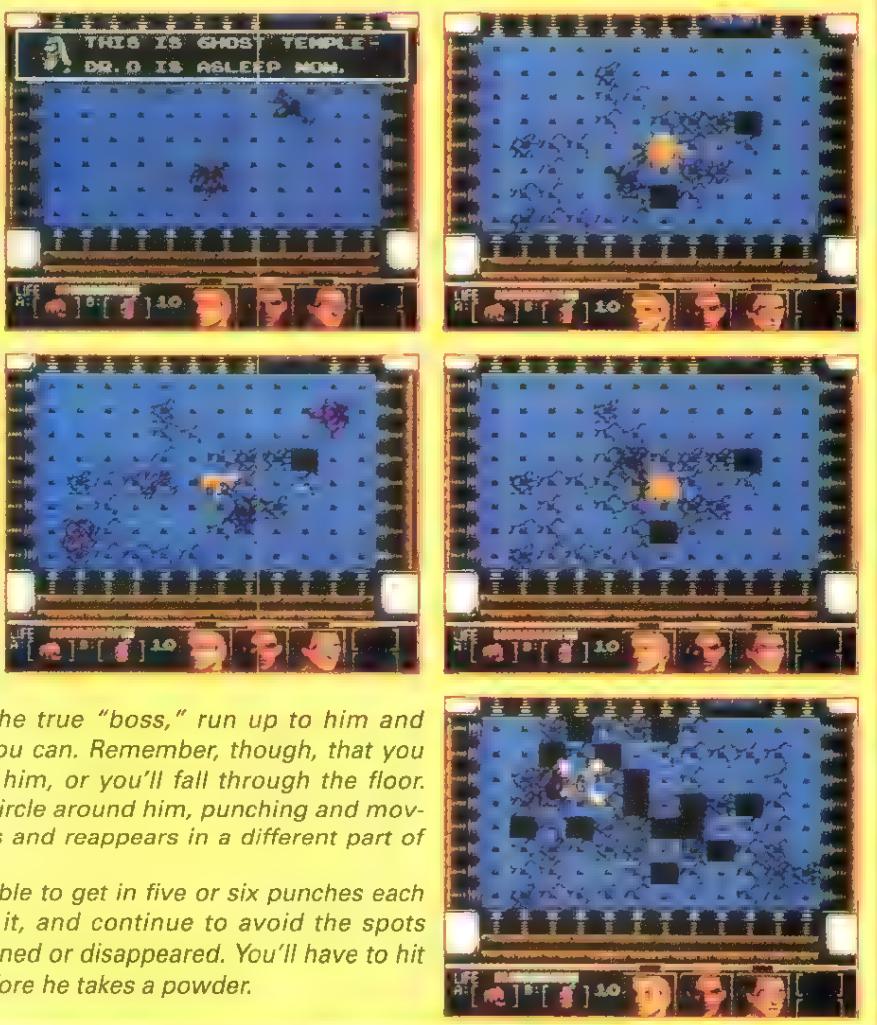
—Darrell W. Adams
Defuniak Springs, Florida

Try to change to Grant Collier before you reach the flight of stairs that leads to the Ghost Temple on the fourth floor of Syrinx. You'll need his speed to make it through the "end boss" battle.

The important thing to remember about the Ghost Temple is that you have to keep moving—the floor tiles will disintegrate if you stand on them too long. When the spinning ninja fighters appear, watch carefully to see which one is the real Iron Claw and which ones are ghosts.

When you have identified the true "boss," run up to him and punch him as many times as you can. Remember, though, that you can't just stand there and slug him, or you'll fall through the floor. The secret to beating him is to circle around him, punching and moving repeatedly until he vanishes and reappears in a different part of the room.

If you're quick, you may be able to get in five or six punches each time he appears. Just keep at it, and continue to avoid the spots where the floor tiles have weakened or disappeared. You'll have to hit the Iron Claw about 17 times before he takes a powder.



I'm having trouble with Electronic Arts' *The Immortal* for the Sega Genesis. How do you get past the level with the giant spiders? Do you need the alcohol, or is it just a joke? I've tried everything I can think of and decided to turn to you for help.

—Brian Rose
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

The alcohol is no joke—you won't be able to get through Level 6 without it. Start the level by crawling through one of the holes in the first room. Wait until you see the spider legs at the other hole before you go through. Move close to the giant Black Widow, but when she stands up, back off to avoid her webs. As soon as she sits back down again, move in to engage her in battle.

In the next room, grab the bottle of alcohol and pour it on the treasure chest. (If you don't take this precaution, you'll be eaten alive by baby spiders when you open the chest.) Inside, you'll find some gold, a spell of levitation and a note that explains exactly how to get through the next room, the "hall of webs."

Be careful, though—you still need to avoid the large egg sacs when you use the levitation spell, and the wizard has a tendency to bounce off the walls uncontrollably while he's floating around up there. Take it slowly, and try to guide him with gentle taps on the control pad. 



Cosmic Fantasy 2

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CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Konami Establishes Hint Line

Konami has introduced a new "900" hotline that will have hints for both its cartridge and computer software. Players calling from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time, will speak with actual game counselors, while those calling all other times will have access to a computer-operated hint system. The new phone line will cost 70¢ per minute, and minors must have their parents' permission to call.

Brøderbund to Buy PC Globe

Brøderbund Software will acquire PC Globe Inc., paying the atlas publisher's shareholders \$1.5 million. Earlier this year, Brøderbund became distributor of all PC Globe products and had supplied a line of credit to PC Globe for up to \$500,000. In January, Brøderbund sued Intracorp, which allegedly had plans to purchase PC Globe; since then, Intracorp countersued, but a court dismissed all of its claims.

FBI Raids Software Pirates

The FBI raided "Davy Jones Locker" computer bulletin board, which had allegedly been illegally distributing copyrighted software to its subscribers in 36 states and 12 countries. Armed with a search warrant, agents took all of the equipment from Richard Kenadek's owned-and-operated bulletin board, including a Novelle server and a 4-gigabit workstation. A thorough examination of seized equipment will help determine whether an arrest warrant would be justified. Kenadek would allegedly limit the number of programs a Davy Jones member could receive, as well as the daily time on the bulletin board; however, members could upload copyrighted software onto the bulletin board for additional time and programs. The Software Publishers Association (SPA) plans to file a lawsuit against Kenadek, but neither the FBI nor the SPA plans to seek legal action against individual members.

Sears to Open Nintendo Displays

Sears has signed an agreement with Nintendo establishing the "World of Nintendo" display areas in Sears stores. Each display will have several stations for customers to try the games, as well as a 20-inch SNES demo screen and a 12-inch

COMPILED BY DAVID MOSKOWITZ



Atari Lowers Price of Lynx Software

Atari entertainment has announced a five-tier price schedule for Lynx software, which will now be priced at \$19.99, \$29.99, \$34.99, \$39.99 and \$49.99. The Lynx will still be sold as a \$99 base unit and in a \$129.99 package that also includes a game cartridge, ComLynx multiplayer cable, carrying pouch and batteries.

Judge Upholds Galoob's Right to Manufacture Game Genie

A three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit, has unanimously affirmed U.S. District Court Judge Fern M. Smith's ruling in favor of Galoob last July, which allowed the manufacture and sale of Galoob's Game Genie for the NES. The court has still not ruled on the \$15



TAKE A STAB IN THE DARK.



But aim carefully. Or you'll never see the light of day. You and your Wizard, Knight, and Ninja allies must find the magic swords and slash through 50 floors infested with giant gryphons, three

headed hydras and fire breathing dragons. Prove that nothing is mightier than your sword. Or, Drockmar Keep will be in eternal darkness. The sword fight of your life awaits at your store today.



When the serpent rises out of the slimey ooze, you've gotta slash him before he gets you.



Aim your sword toward the sky, or the Gryphon will get the jump on you.



Get your stabs in fast, 'cause the Green Dragon is faster than a bolt of lightning.

CAPCOM

Game Boy screen for spectators. Five hundred stores are currently planning to feature the World of Nintendo.

CompuServe Drops Wolfenstein 3-D

Following requests by German government officials, CompuServe has barred the game *Wolfenstein 3-D* from its shareware boards. The game features castle walls covered with swastikas and portraits of Hitler, both of which are illegal to display in public in Germany. [For a review of the game, see the Computer-Game Reviews, page 112 of this issue.]

Maxis Launches BBS

Maxis has launched its own BBS, which users may log on to at no charge at (510) 253-3869. The bulletin board will allow Maxis game players to speak with each other as well as Maxis technical support representatives and game designers.

Maxis BBS users will be able to upload and trade cities, planets, robot arenas and ant colonies, in addition to being able to take part in frequent tournaments and other contests.

Also available will be on-line product registration, free demos and upgrades, shareware utilities that enhance Maxis games and background on game technology, including artificial life, genetic algorithms and computer-generated graphics.

Top Coin-ops for May 1992

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* by Midway
2. *Terminator 2* by Midway
3. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
4. *Double Axle* by Taito
5. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
6. *Super High Impact* by Midway
7. *Space Gun* by Taito
8. *Captain America* by Data East
9. *S.C.I.* by Taito
10. *Beast Busters* by SNK

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *X-Men* by Konami
2. *Steel Talons* by Atari
3. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
4. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
5. *Galaxy Force* by Sega



million that Nintendo was required to pay to Galoob to cover all lost profits and damages Galoob incurred because it was enjoined from selling the Game Genie.

Nintendo and Sega to Lower 16-Bit System Prices

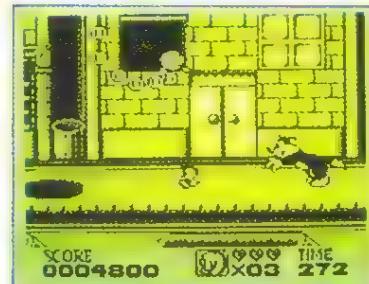
Nintendo of America and Sega of America have announced new packaging for their 16-bit systems. The Super Nintendo Entertainment System's new Control Set, which contains the SNES control unit, one hand-controller and no software, will be sold for \$99.95. (Consumers will still be able to buy the complete package, featuring the control unit, two hand-controllers and *Super Mario World*, for 149.95.) Similarly, Sega will make its Genesis available in a special \$99.99 package

that will contain one controller and no software. Sega will also offer the Game Gear in a \$99.99 package, sans software.



Sunsoft to Produce Looney Tunes Games

Sunsoft has signed a five-year agreement with Warner Brothers allowing the software publisher to produce games based on the Looney Tunes licensed characters. The first releases will be *Road Runner's Death*



Valley Rally for the SNES and *Looney Tunes Madcap Melody* for the Game Boy, both of which will be out in October. In December, Sunsoft will also release *Taz-Mania* for the Super NES.

Hudson Soft Publishes Guidebook to Limit Game Play

Hudson Soft USA Inc. has begun distributing a booklet advising parents how to monitor the amount of time their children play video games. "Master Higgins' 10 Tips for Responsible Play" prominently features the *Adventure Island* saga star, who gives detailed suggestions to parents on topics such as setting time limits on game

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CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

6. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco
7. *Mad Dog* by Betson/ALG
8. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
9. *Road Riot* by Atari
10. *Final Lap* by Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Relief Pitcher* by Atari
3. *Knights of Round* by Capcom
4. *Total Carnage* by Midway
5. *Rim Rockin' B-Ball* by Strata
6. *Wrestlefest* by Technos
7. *Steel Gunner 2* by Namco
8. *Fatal Fury* by SNK
9. *Baseball Stars 2* by SNK
10. *Ninja Commando* by SNK

Top IBM PC Games for April 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, D.C., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Babbages, Waldensoft-ware and Electronics Boutique.

Top 10 IBM PC Games

1. *Ultima VII* by Origin
2. *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* by Lucasfilm Games
3. *SimCity* by Maxis
4. *Star Trek 25th Anniversary* by Interplay
5. *Ultima Underworld* by Origin
6. *Global Conquest* by Medalist
7. *Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition* by Accolade
8. *Civilization* by MicroProse
9. *Risk* by Mastertronic
10. *Falcon 3.0* by Spectrum HoloByte

Top 10 IBM PC Education Games

1. *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
2. *Where in the U.S.A. Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
3. *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* by Software Toolworks
4. *New Math Blaster Plus* by Davidson
5. *Playroom* by Brøderbund
6. *Reader Rabbit 1* by The Learning Company
7. *Oregon Trail* by MECC
8. *Treehouse* by Brøderbund
9. *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
10. *Reader Rabbit 2* by The Learning Company

play, making extended playtime a reward for good behavior and becoming involved in the game-buying process. The pamphlet is the U.S. introduction of Takahashi Toshiyuki's Japanese campaign for responsible

game play. Toshiyuki, who was the inspiration for Master Higgins, began the program in 1987, which championed the limit of one hour of game play per day. Those interested in receiving the booklet should write to Kevin Sullivan, Marketing Manager, Hudson Soft USA, 400 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 515, South San Francisco, CA 94080; or call (415) 495-HINT.

Capcom Fights Counterfeit Street Fighter II

Facing widespread media speculation and sizable potential losses due to black-market activity, Capcom has



announced that *Street Fighter II* for the SNES will be identical to the Japanese version of the game. Prices for the anticipated hit will be \$70-\$75, and any cartridges selling well below that price will most likely be counterfeit versions.

TTI Lowers

Hardware Prices

Less than three weeks after lowering the price of its TurboGrafx-16 to \$69.99 (one game included) and the TurboGrafx-CD to \$149.99, Turbo Technologies Inc. has lowered the price of the TurboExpress



to \$199.99 and the tuner that allows it to be used as a television to \$59.99. TTI has also extended its "Four Games Free" promotion, in which consumers showing proof of purchase of the TurboExpress can choose four of the following six games free: *Pacland*, *Victory Run*, *Alien Crush*, *Fantasy Zone*, *Vigilante* and *Power Golf*. 

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You are graded as a stick of one to five (yep, the more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint).

Now the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to: VGC, 1121 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!

EASTER
EGG

HUNT

Lots of great tips for Genesis fans this month—look for hints and codes on Outlaw, Mike Ditka Power Football and a comprehensive list of cheats for Metal Gear. Don't miss the lyrics and Game Boy Rap, as well as one of the first Easter Egg Easter eggs ever to appear in an American video-game magazine.

Street Fighter II

(CAPCOM FOR THE SUPER NES)



The rumors are true—*Street Fighter II* does contain a hidden player-vs.-player mode after all. Though the standard game does not allow both players to choose the same character in a two player game, we have learned of a secret code that gives you the power to do just that.

When you turn the system on, wait for the words "Licensed by Nintendo" to fade out. As soon as you hear the harplike tones and the Capcom name starts to appear, input the following code: press Down, R button, Up, L button, Y and B. The buttons must be pressed carefully, one at a time, but you must finish the code before the Capcom logo disappears. You'll hear a quick bubbling tone if you've done it correctly, and the background of the title screen will be blue instead of black.

If the trick doesn't work the first time, just reset the game and try it again. Our thanks to Richard Arenaro Jr., who was the first to break the news about this valuable tip.



CHARTS



Mike Ditka Power Football

(BALLISTIC FOR THE GENESIS)



Juan E. Villegas of Inglewood, California, has found a way to score a touchdown on every possession in *Power Football*. Choose "punt" on the play selection screen, then wait for the field display to come up. As your players are lining up, press **START** and go to the Substitutions menu. Replace your punter with a faster player—preferably one with a speed rating of 80 or more—and return to the game.

When the ball is snapped, head to the left or right sideline and start running for the end zone. When you get about 15 or 20 yards past the line of scrimmage, all of the players on the opposing team will freeze like ghostly statues—you'll be able to walk right through them! In a two-player game, the player who is being controlled by your opponent will be the only one who can move. Nice Easter egg, Juan...thanks for writing.



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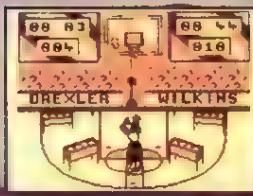
NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE 2...
WHERE TRAVELING IS NOT ONLY ALLOWED...
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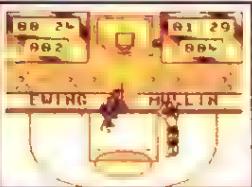
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ALL-NEW SLAM DUNK
COMPETITION.



BEAT THE CLOCK IN THE
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27 NBA All-Stars in the backboard
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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 26

Awesome Golf

(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)



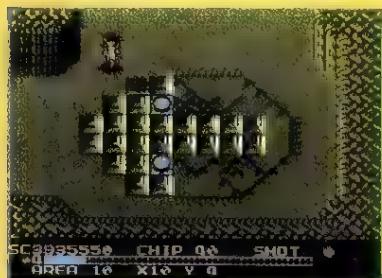
This Easter egg comes directly from Rob Nicholson of Hand Made Software, the designer of *Awesome Golf*. If you enter your name as "LANDLORD," you can cheat on every hole. Press Option 2 to tee off, and you'll hit the ball perfectly straight at maximum power every time. Hit Option 2 while the ball is in flight and it will rocket right into the cup!

The Guardian Legend

(BRODERBUND FOR THE NES)



Here's a useful tip that allows you to stock up on power chips and refill your life meter in this classic NES adventure/shoot-'em-up. Whenever you see a power pod that's on the opposite side of two pyramids whose corners are touching diagonally, just press the Guardian into the corner between the two pyramids (as shown). You can power-up as much as you want, and the pod won't be used up.



Q*Bert for Game Boy

(JALECO FOR THE GAME BOY)



This code will allow you to see the complete series of the game's intermissions. To watch *Q*Bert: The Movie*, press Right, Up, B, A, Down, Up, B, Down, Up, B at the title screen.

Sengoku

(SNK FOR THE NEO-geo)



VG&CE reader John Syverud of Arden Hills, Minnesota, wrote to tell us about a feature of this beat-'em-up that isn't mentioned in the instruction manual. Certain characters can power-up for a special attack at any time during the game.

If you're playing as the regular character or the wolf, just hold down the A button until your character becomes "energized," then let go for a powerful blast. Try this trick when you're playing as the ninja character, and you'll shrink down to half of your original height!



MLBPA Sports Talk Baseball

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)



You can get an easy out against the computer in Sega's new baseball game if the computer team has men on second and third or bases loaded. Just press the B button as if you're about to attempt a pick-off and throw the ball to third base. Then, quickly throw to first, and you'll see the runners take off—but the man on second takes such a long time to get back to the base that you can *always* pick him off! It's almost worth it to walk or bean every batter just to take advantage of this quirk, which was sent in by Dusty Griffin of Carrollton, Georgia. Thanks, Dusty.



You'll find many of these exciting new features on our updated classics:



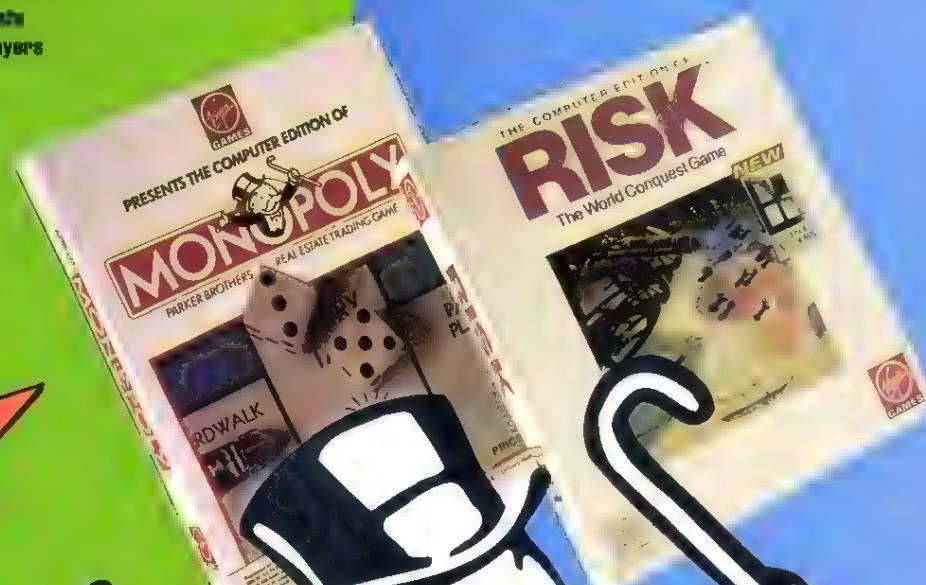
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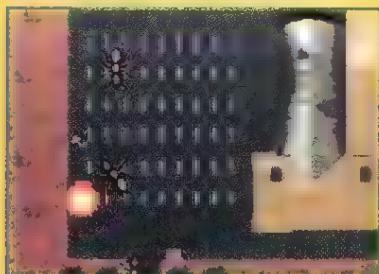
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It Came From the Desert

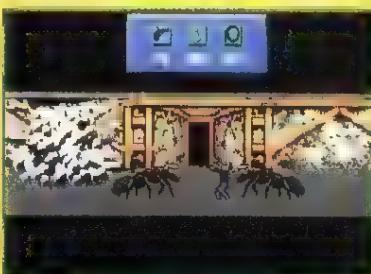
(NEC FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16)



Scott C. DeFreitas sent us a great Easter egg via the World of Video Games special interest group on the Delphi computer information service. To practice the arcade sequences in this epic B-movie adventure, just press the appropriate controller button as shown while the TurboGrafx-CD title screen reads "JUST A MOMENT..." and hold it down until the desired scene appears. This doesn't interfere with your saved game. Thanks for the tip, Scotty.



Press and hold I



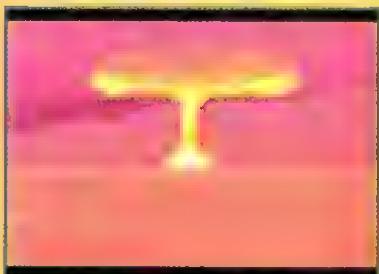
Press and hold II



Press and hold I and II



Press and hold Left



Press and hold Up



Press and hold Down

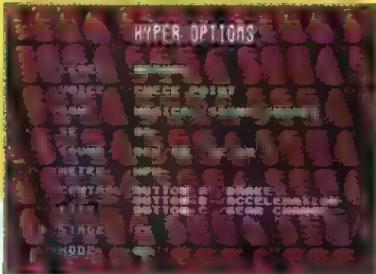


OutRun

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)



At the title screen, press **START**, then press the A button 11 times, press B three times and press C eight times. This will change the regular Options menu to a "Hyper Options" menu, with a stage select and mode select at the bottom of the screen.



Steel Empire

(FLYING EDGE FOR THE GENESIS)



To bring up a stage select menu in *Steel Empire*, go to the Options screen and move the cursor to Sound Test. Press A to listen to the sounds in this order: Sound 1, Sound 1, Sound 9 and Sound 2. The word "Round" will appear at the bottom of the screen—now you can start on any of the game's seven levels.

For a different type of bonus, set up the options as follows: Difficulty—Hard, Ships—2, Continues—1. Next, go down to the sound test and select Sound 65 and press A (you won't hear any sound). Start the game, and you'll find that you have 99 ships in reserve.

As if that's not enough to help you through this challenging shoot-'em-up, there's another trick that allows you to power-up your weapons at any time. Set up the Options screen like this: Difficulty—Hard, Ships—3, Continues—2. Then move to the sound test and play Sound 77. Once you've done this, you can gain Level 20 firepower by pressing the B button on controller 2 while the game is in progress.

Finally, you can start the game with 99 bombs in reserve by entering this code at the ship select screen (the one that lets you choose between the biplane and the zeppelin): On controller 2, press C, A, C, A, **START** and B. If you perform these tricks one at a time, you can use them all in the same game.

“Nice Shot.”

Rack up major points in your choice of straight pocket billiards, 9-ball or the trick game.

Master the arts of Aim, Power and English to run the table and smoke your opponent.

Prove your skill as you pocket 19 radical trick shots that only look impossible.

C'mon, sink some balls.

So stroke a mean cue.

And don't get caught

behind the eight-ball.





ACTION

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Check 'em out.

In Extra Innings, our



newest hit for the 16-bit, you call the shots and control all the action: the starting lineup, your batter's slugging power, the spin on the curve ball, even your player's dive for a shot up the middle.

With Soccer Mania, for GameBoy, you take the field against six of the world's toughest teams. Then it's your job to kick, pass and dribble your way to the world cup championship.

On the action/adventure front, for NES and GameBoy, both Hook and Hudson Hawk will

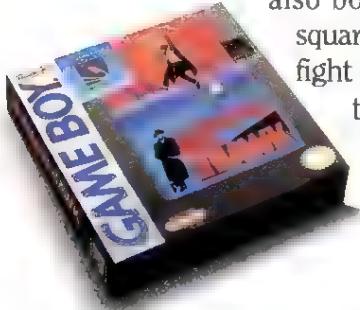


PACKED!

get your blood pumping.

In Hook, you not only do battle as Peter Pan with the pirates and creatures of Neverland, you also board Hook's ship and square off in a duel for the fight of your life. (It's a good thing you can fly!)

Hudson Hawk puts you in the shoes of the world's most famous cat-



burglar. As The Hawk, you have to outsmart world-class criminals and sneak through traps, tunnels and airshafts to steal the secret device that will save the world from ruin.

And in SmartBall you'll enter the wackiest worlds imaginable, as you change your shape and slip, slide, slither and ooze your way through steamy tropics and urban battlezones.

So check out these action-packed games from Sony Imagesoft. If it's action you want, we've got it.



THE 1992 TOKYO TOY SHOW REPORT

BY MIKE DAVIDILA

After suffering from a bad case of jet lag, sensory overload and post-CES stress syndrome, trying to find the Nippon Convention Center's train station, using Japanese kanji characters, seemed like effortless child's play. If the CES didn't break me, I surely wasn't going to let a Japanese train station conquer my intellect. After I pinpointed my location and dropped 290 yen into the ticket dispenser, I took my ticket and tried to make believe I knew where I was going. Luckily I made it to the convention center without a hitch, instead of winding up at the Meiji Shrine or bumping into Godzilla.

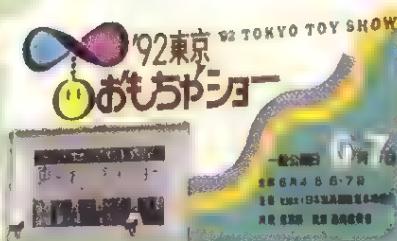
This year's Tokyo Toy Show was overflowing with a variety of CD titles that crossed over all genres of video gaming. Shooters, RPGs, sports, strategies, simulations and even genres that are unexplored territory in the U.S., such as digital comics, which are starting to make headway in Japan. An industry insider revealed that a whopping 500-plus new video games were released in that country in 1991.

The most impressive booth at the show was NEC's, with more than 36 new games on display for the PC Engine, Duo, Core Grafx II, LT and GT, with two-thirds of those games CD titles. Unlike in the U.S. market, NEC holds a second-place position in the video-game industry in Japan, right behind Nintendo, while Sega is in third place. Nintendo normally doesn't attend this show because it is not a member of the Japan International Toy Fair Association.

NEC will introduce a RAM backup cart that plugs between the Duo and joypad.



In a separate announcement, NEC is making plans for a RAM backup cart for the PC Engine Duo that plugs between the machine and joypad. It is said that the device will have one megabit of static RAM (SRAM) and will use four AA batteries. The projected release date in Japan is late fourth quarter of 1992 or first quarter of '93,



This year's Tokyo Toy Show had a large crop of new CD titles.

and the retail price is currently undecided.

Sega also had several CD titles displayed in its booth, along with the Wondermega machine (Sega-JVC's combination Mega Drive, Mega-CD with MIDI interface), which is already being sold in Japan for about ¥55,000 (\$460). That's ¥24,800 (\$206) less than its original ¥79,800 (\$665) retail price. Keep your eyes open for this one in the U.S.



Expect to see the Wondermega in the U.S.



Sega's Teradrive—part PC, part Genesis.

Another wild piece of Sega hardware shown, the Teradrive, is a combo 286 IBM PC compatible computer, Mega Drive and Mega-CD drive in one single unit. At its heart is a 10 MHz 80286 CPU, a 7.6/10 MHz 68000 processor and a 3.58 MHz Z-80 processor. The Teradrive also has 640 x 480 VGA graphics and standard Mega Drive/Genesis graphic modes available. The machine comes in three different models, with varying RAM configurations and a 30-megabyte hard drive available in the Model 3. The prices are ¥148,000 (\$1,233) for the Model 1, ¥188,000 (\$1,566) for the Model 2 and ¥248,000 (\$2,066) for the Model 3.

Role-playing games are extremely hot right now in Japan, and that is not limited to video games. You can go to just about any newsstand and pick up RPG-style weekly comic books that are about 400 pages in size. Take any form of public transportation in Japan and you can see people thoroughly enjoying reading them. Unfortunately, many of the RPG video games never make it to the U.S. because of the language barrier.

Now let's take a look at what video-game manufacturers have to offer to the Japanese public.

ASCII

The Super L5 ASCII Stick is a one-handed controller for the Super Famicom that contains many of the features



Best chewable video-game product.

of the *ascii Pad* sold in the U.S. Due out in August '92, the L5 will sell for ¥2,980 (\$24).

Daisenryaku for the Super Famicom is a World War II hex-grid strategy simulation that is similar to many board games of that genre. Due out in September '92, the game will retail for ¥9,800 (\$81).

CAPCOM

Yes, *Street Fighter II* is as popular in Japan as in the United States. Capcom's booth was set up with a couple dozen Super NESes with *SF II* carts in them, and, on the day that the show was open to the general public, you couldn't walk in the booth for the crowd of people.

Capcom didn't have any new games that we hadn't seen already, but they did have the best bag of the show.



COCONUTS



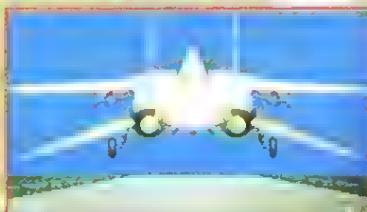
Leave it to a small-name company to produce one of the most entertaining games at the show. *Color Wars* is a simple, strategy CD game that is a 3-D variation of an Othello-style game. One to four players can compete against each other or the computer. *Color Wars* is for the PC Engine with CD-ROM, and it was to be released June 26 in Japan for ¥7,300 (\$60).

COMPILE

For the Mega Drive/Mega-CD, *Nobunga and his Ninja Force* is an intense, overhead perspective shooter with a twist. Currently about 75% completed, the game is due out in August '92 and the retail price is undecided.

CRI / GS K RESEARCH INSTITUTE

After Burner III for the Mega Drive/Mega-CD is on its way. Due out in August '92 in Japan, the latest sequel in the *After Burner* series uses impressive digitized graphics and animation that rival many computer flight simulators. *After Burner III* will retail for ¥8,400 (\$70) and will also be available for the FM Towns computer.



DATA EAST / WOLFTEAM

Thunder Storm FX was one of the most impressive Mega Drive/Mega-CD games at the show. TSFX uses full-motion video for game play,



and there are over 10,000 frames of animation. The gamer commands and pilots an LX-3 FX attack chopper on different missions. Due out the last day of July '92; no price has been slated.

DATA WEST

In the third sequel in a shooter series, *Rayxanber III* for the PC Engine with Super CD-ROM, you continue on your mission to save the Earth from an attacking alien force. Due out late in June of '92, *Rayxanber III* will retail for ¥6,800 (\$56).

ENIX

460 Million Years Ago—To the Faraway Eden for the Super Famicom is an original, dinosaur-evolution action simulator that could easily be called *SimDinosaur*. No release date has been decided upon; it will retail for ¥9,600 (\$80).



GAME ARTS

Lunar—The Silver Star for the Sega Mega-CD is a hot new RPG title that looks like it is going to be a hit among Mega Drive users. Scheduled for a late June release date, *Lunar—The Silver Star* will retail for ¥7,800 (\$65).

HUDSON SOFT

Soldier Blade for the PC Engine/HuCard, is a top-view perspective shooter. Scheduled for release in early July '92, with a retail price of ¥6,500 (\$54).

The Record of Lodoss War for the PC Engine/Super CD-ROM is a fantasy RPG game. Scheduled for release in mid-July '92, with a retail price of ¥7,200 (\$60).



Earth Light for the Super Famicom/8-megabit cart, is a space war game with a strategic element. Scheduled for release in late July '92, it will retail for ¥8,500 (\$71).

Power League V for the PC Engine/HuCard is a baseball simulator. Scheduled for release in early August '92, it will retail for ¥6,800 (\$56).



Bomberman '93 for the PC Engine/HuCard is the long-awaited sequel to the original. Keep your eyes peeled for this one in the U.S. Scheduled for a late '92 release in Japan; no price has been set.



Dodge Ball for the PC Engine/ HuCard is a dodge ball action simulator. Scheduled for release in autumn of '92; no price has been slated.



Yuna for the PC Engine/Super CD-ROM is a digital comic, skewed for a younger, female audience.

Scheduled for release in autumn of '92; no price has been determined.

INTEC

Pro Baseball Super for the PC Engine/Super CD-ROM is a plain vanilla baseball simulator where you can choose from one of 12 teams. Gamers can play against a second human opponent or against the computer. Due out in September '92, it will retail for ¥6,800 (\$56).

KANEKO

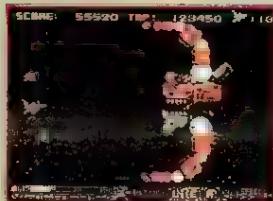
Power Athlete for the Mega Drive is a SFII-style game where players fight against world-famous masters of martial arts, competing for the world championship. Due out in November '92; no price has been slated.



Musashi (Master Swordsman) for the Mega Drive is an action-oriented Shogun-themed game where you hack-n-slash your way through enemies. Due out in October '92; no price has been slated.

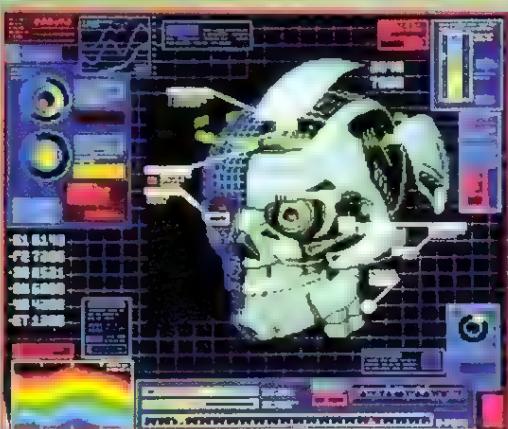
KEMCO

An enthralling shooter for the Super Famicom, *Phalanx—The Enforce Fighter A-144* has over five different missions. Due out in August '92, it will retail for ¥8,900 (\$74).



KONAMI

Snatcher for the PC Engine/CD-ROM is a futuristic action-adventure game, or, as the title screen labels



it, a "cyber punk adventure." The game has a *Blade Runner* look and feel to it. Due out in October '92; no price has been set.

MASNA

Ranma 1/2—Defeat the Former Champion! for the PC Engine/Super CD-ROM is on its way. Currently there are versions for the PC Engine, Game Boy and Super Famicom. Will we see a Mega Drive/Mega-CD version? Let's keep our fingers crossed! Due out in October '92; no price has been listed.



MICRONET

Black Hole Assault for the Mega Drive/Mega-CD is an action-fighting game where the gamer must battle it out with Cybernetic Anthropomorphic Machines (CAMS) and save the planet from invasion. Due out this autumn; no slated price.

The Third World War for the Mega Drive/Mega-CD is a strategic tank warfare game with scenarios in Europe and the Middle East. Due out this autumn; no price has been announced.

RIVERHILL SOFT

Dubbed a "new virtual-reality game" by the people at Riverhill, *Faceball 2000* for the Game Gear closely resembles the SNES version. The game will have Arena, Cyber Zone and Cyber Scape modes. The 2-megabit cartridge will have more than 70 levels of mazes. Due out in December; no price has been set.



SIMS

Junker's High for the Mega Drive is a futuristic race car game similar to *F-Zero*. Due out in August '92; no price has been slated.

SUNSOFT

Dodge Danpet for the Super Famicom is a full-fledged dodge ball contest simulator. Dodge ball has become a popular scholastic sport in Japan, so do not be surprised if you see more of this type of game come out for the different systems. Due out about the end of July '92, it will retail for ¥8,500 (\$70).



TELENET

Cosmic Fantasy 2 is just being introduced by Working Designs here in the U.S., but in Japan, *Cosmic Fantasy 3* for the PC Engine/Super CD-ROM was being demoed. The third title in this RPG series is expected to hit the shelves late in September; no price has been slated.

F Project for the PC Engine/Super CD-ROM is a Formula 1 race game. Due out in late August '92, it will retail for ¥6,980 (\$58).

That covers all of the major games and products at the show, but not the entire show. Unfortunately though, a lot of what you've seen and read about here will never make it to this country; but keep your hopes high and your fingers crossed!



Jennifer Capriati Tennis A and Genesis. Great Match.

Jennifer Capriati

Jennifer Capriati is one of the brightest prospects in professional tennis today. Her combination of power, stamina and intelligence the past two years has taken her a long way in many top world tournaments. This year holds even more opportunities for Jennifer, and she's only 16!

Now she has teamed up with Renovation for the first tennis video game for the Sega Genesis system. All the realism of professional tennis is here, from the overhead smash to an ace serve. Play as Jennifer in exhibition singles and doubles matches or take her to the top in the circuit tournaments. You can even risk trying to beat Jennifer with a choice of up to 24 different players, or 8 you can create yourself.

What a great match: Jennifer Capriati, Sega Genesis and Renovation Products. See you at Courtside!



RENOVATION
PRODUCTS

987 University Avenue, Suite 10
Los Gatos, California 95030



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CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD

VIDEO

REVIEWS

Dungeon Master

JVC
For the Super NES (N/A)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

About five years ago, a small software company named Faster Than Light Games (FTL) released a role-playing game that forever changed the direction of the dungeon-exploring adventure genre. Named *Dungeon Master*, the program was a phenomenal success and quickly became the best-selling game ever on the Atari ST and Amiga computers. To this day, *Dungeon Master* still sells well. Moreover, it has inspired several "clones" on various computer systems, including *Bloodwyck*, *The Stygian Abyss* and the ever-popular *Eye of the Beholder* series. Video gamers who have lusted after these computer-only adventures are now in luck. JVC has just released a version of *Dungeon Master* for the Super NES.

As I said previously, *Dungeon Master* is a dungeon-exploring RPG. The object is to search through each level of the dungeon, looking for clues, solving puzzles, fighting monsters and, finally, confronting the ultimate dark lord, named Chaos. The dungeons are so spookily realistic that you'll quickly be plunged into a fantasy story from which you'll find it almost impossible to tear yourself away. Doors rattle eerily, traps open beneath your feet and the distant, dreadful sounds of shambling creatures echo throughout the hallways.



JVC's version of *Dungeon Master* brings a venerable and groundbreaking game to the Super NES.



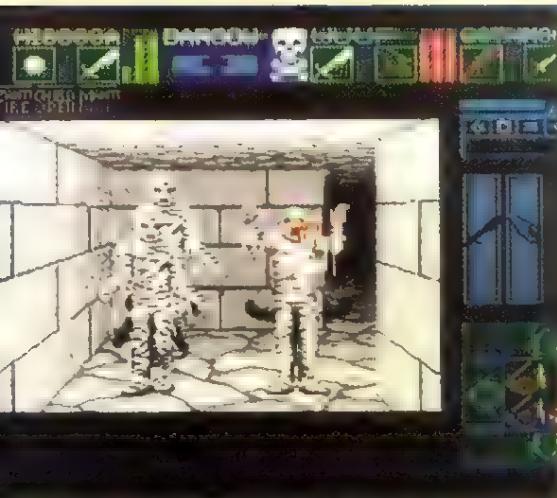
As with most RPGs, your adventurers (of which you have four) can have various occupations. However, *Dungeon Master*, being an older RPG, offers only four choices: fighter, wizard, ninja and priest. Still, any member of your party can learn any of these skills, although some members are better at some skills than others.

Physical skills can be developed by having the adventurer in question get more involved in fighting. Swinging a sword, shooting arrows and throwing objects all help improve fighter and ninja skills. In fact, if there are no monsters to fight, you can find a safe room and just spend some time throwing objects against the walls. This, too, will improve your party's skills.

Wizards and priests can, of course, cast spells, and each has a unique set of spells from which he can choose. Like physical skills, the magical arts can be learned by

any party member, if that member is willing to practice. To cast a spell, you must first have enough mana (magical energy). You then must select the right combination of symbols for the spell. Learning to combine the symbols properly is another of the game's puzzles, although you will frequently find scrolls containing very valuable magical information.

Dungeon Master is played in first-person perspective. That is, as you move through the dungeon, the scenes on the screen move toward you, as if you were seeing them through the adventurers' eyes. In the stone corridors, you'll discover all sorts of items,



including scrolls, food, weapons, flasks for potions and, of course, monsters. You will, in fact, discover many more items than your small party of four adventurers can use. Mastering the game involves knowing when to keep something in your inventory and when to leave it behind.

Although there are plenty of creatures in the dungeons, *Dungeon Master* doesn't force a battle upon you at every step. This is more a puzzle-solving game than a hack-and-slash adventure. In fact, being successful in some battles even requires a bit of puzzle-solving. For example, you will discover that some of the monsters can be injured by slamming them in doors.

The doorways here, though, are fewer. While the computer version of *Dungeon Master* was large, the Super NES version is a little abbreviated. Still, the game appears to include most of the original puzzles and items. There are just a few less corridors to tramp through. If nothing else, this makes the mapping task (yep, you'll need graph paper for this baby) a little easier, since many empty corridors and rooms have been left out of the game.

The smaller size of the dungeons notwithstanding, JVC's version of *Dungeon Master* brings a venerable and groundbreaking game to the Super NES in grand style. This is one game no adventurer worth his sword and tunic will want to miss.

—Clayton Walnum

JVC
3800 Barham Blvd., Suite 305
Los Angeles, CA 90068
(213) 878-0101



SEGA
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

BOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Anyone who's seen the Tasmanian Devil in one of the older Warner Bros. cartoons or the new syndicated cartoon upon which this game is based knows that Taz is an easily excited dude. So, when Grandpa Devil tells a tale of a long-lost valley where seabirds lay eggs big enough to feed a Devil family for a year, Taz runs off to find himself one.

There are 16 stages and six levels of platform action between Taz and his egg. In each stage, Taz comes across bad guys and lots of different objects: bombs, which blow up inside Taz's tummy if he eats them; chili peppers, which give Taz fiery breath; 1-ups; and other goodies. Taz has a larger appetite than Oprah Winfrey, so he'll eat anything he comes across unless you put him into "Object Carrying" mode. Once Taz picks up an object, he can walk with and throw it. Several stages in the game have puzzles that require you to throw objects; it's too bad that the programmers didn't create many more puzzles to solve (for reasons to follow).



Taz-Mania's
graphics are
among the
best ever seen
in a Genesis
game.



continued on page 42

SEGA PLAYERS

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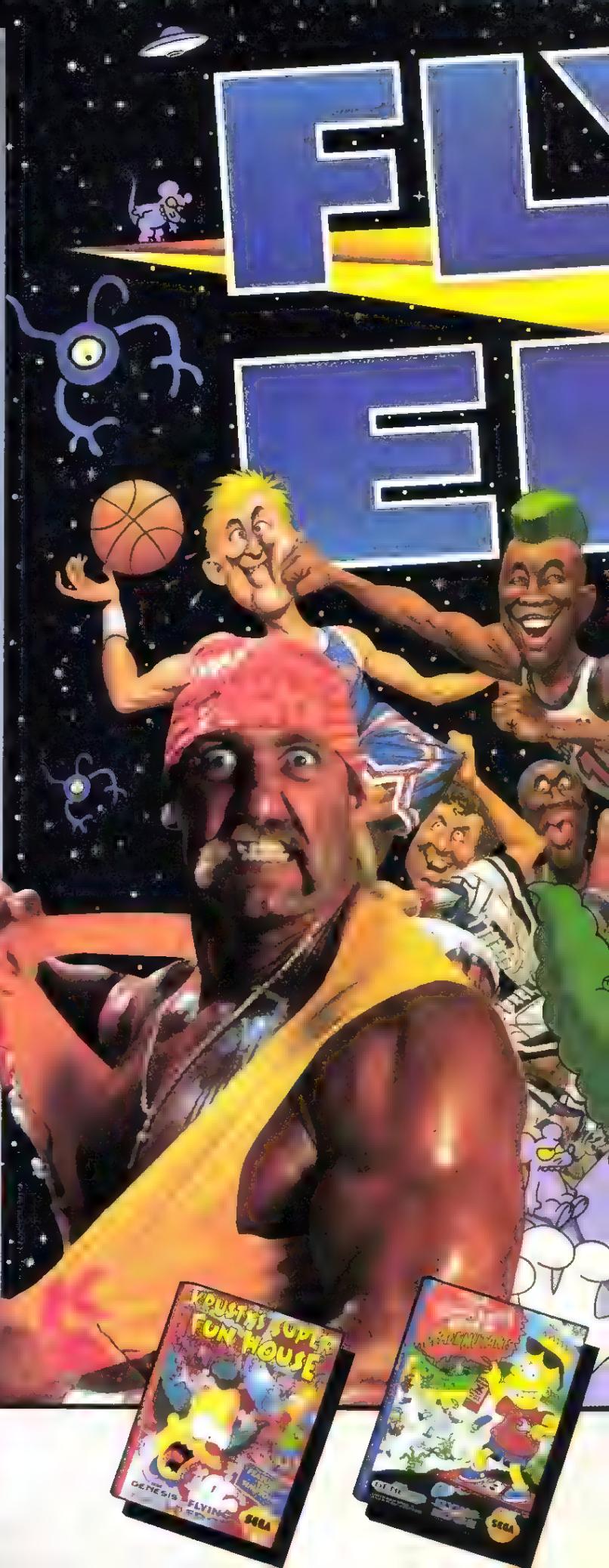
**SEGA
GENESIS**
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

GAME GEAR

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WINNING EDGE



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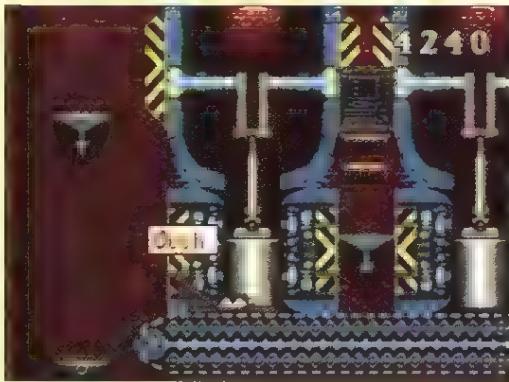
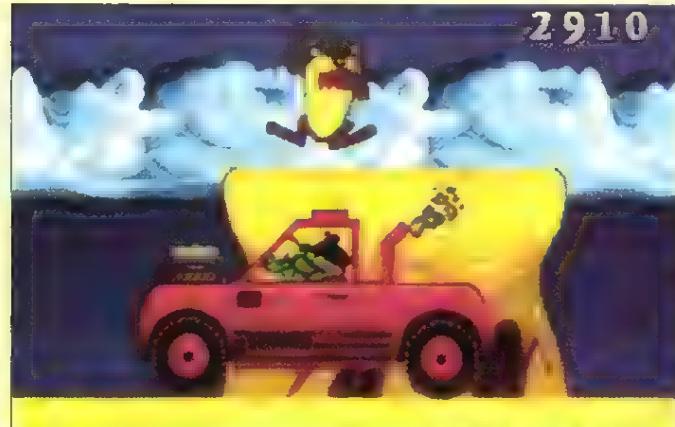
Sega's *Taz-Mania* for the Genesis has 16 stages and six levels of platform action.

Taz has several different attacks. If he's eaten a chili pepper, he can incinerate enemies with his breath (each pepper gives Taz five bursts of flame). Without his fire power, Taz can jump on enemies' heads, grab and eat them(!) or use his whirlwind attack. Unfortunately, you don't score any points when you defeat enemies using the whirlwind.

It all sounds pretty keen, but, unfortunately, *Taz-Mania* has two semimajor drawbacks. The first drawback is that most of the time there's just not enough going on. Enemies are few and far between, and all that really needs to be done is to figure out the path through each stage. Of the six levels in the game, two of them (the factory and the mine) are interesting because of the puzzle elements (switches to throw and elevators to ride); the other four levels are letdowns.

The second drawback is that the game's too easy for experienced players—a flaw that's been creeping into many Genesis games recently. There are two difficulty levels to choose from, but the game can be beaten in a day or two even at the higher setting.

The game play may have flaws, but *Taz-Mania*'s graphics are among the best I've ever seen in a Genesis game. Taz is



perfectly animated, and the backgrounds are colorful and varied. The sound is also excellent, with some appropriately cartoonish music accompanying the action.

Taz-Mania is an above-average platform game, but there's not quite enough action to be had, and most players will have the game whipped in short order. *Taz-Mania* is great for younger gamers and beginners, but veteran Genny players won't find enough here to challenge them.

—Zach Meston

Sega of America Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat

TRADEWEST
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Unlike the hordes of gamers who are just biding their time waiting for Tradewest to deliver Rare's Super NES version of *Battletoads*, I'm always happy to check out the latest stuff from the U.K.'s most prolific developer of NES software. It also helps when the cartridge in question is a translation of a popular Leland arcade title, one that spent many months fluttering around in the coin-op top-ten lists.

Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat is a smooth-handling racing game that lets up to four players compete with Sullivan on nine different courses across America. At stake are cash prizes that number in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. You won't be sending that dough home to your family, though, as most of it will be spent between races on improvements to your vehicle's engine, tires and brakes. Hiring a more efficient (read: higher paid) pit crew is also important to your long-term success, as is the purchase of turbo charges that will give your car brief bursts of speed—for \$3,000 a pop.

Each race features five cars with color-coded pit areas and information windows. The pit stops are a breeze: All you have to do is come close to the area of your car's color. The computer will straighten your vehicle and pull it into position as your crew leaps over the fence and swarms over you like a crazed gang of cockroaches

in white jumpsuits. The variety of courses is one of the game's strongest suits—there are a lot of interesting twists and turns, from the straightforward, 12-lap "Tradewest Speed Bowl" to the sharp angles and underpasses of the Michigan raceway.

Without the scrolling scenery of games like *Galaxy 5000* and Rare's own *R.C. Pro-Am*, *Indy Heat* can't compete with the larger vehicles and scattered bonuses of these and other racing titles. The all-encompassing overhead view of each course is necessary when you consider that all five cars have to be on the screen at all times. It should be pointed out that the game's graphics are certainly more varied and better detailed than those of the similarly themed *Super Sprint*, a highly enjoyable Tengen title from a few years back.

But, even if you can't call *Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat* the definitive NES racing game (did I hear Josh Mandel yell out "Micro Machines!" just then?), you can definitely point to this title as one of the best of the four-player cartridges, because it's one of the most instinctive. Have you ever tried to get your mom in as the fourth



DANNY'S TIPS:

USE TURBOS FOR SPEED BOOST.
USE PIT STOP WHEN OUT OF GAS OR ON FIRE.
TURBO BUTTON WILL EXIT PIT EARLY.
KNOCK OTHER CARS OFF THEIR JACKS.



Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat, by Tradewest, is a smooth-handling racing game.

player in a session of *NES Play Action Football*, only to get stuck trying to explain the intricate button combinations? No problem here—nine out of ten moms should be able to keep pace with Sullivan right from the first race at West Canada. The elegant simplicity of its control scheme makes *Indy Heat* accessible even to those who have no previous control-pad experience.

The only one of the game's features that I don't like is the constant presence of Danny Sullivan's yellow vehicle on the track. Whether you're playing a four-player circuit or just a solo outing, Sullivan represents your only serious opposition, and you must continue to outrace him in order to advance to higher levels. Expect to be rear-ended and sideswiped by Danny constantly, at

times with such violent force that your car bursts into flames! He also issues dubious "advice" about which power-ups you should buy, always recommending the short-lived turbo boosts over more permanent improvements to your engine or brakes.

A great "party" game, *Danny Sullivan's Indy Heat* won't quite set the 8-bit world on fire, but it does have enough action to quicken your pulse for as long as it's plugged into your NES.

—Chris Bieniek

Tradewest Inc.
2400 S. Highway 75
Corsicana, TX 75110
(903) 874-2683

Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu presents a familiar scenario: Our hero's girlfriend (Josephine) is kidnapped by some evil dude (a rather elderly looking vampirish character in Vaderlike body armor), and our hero is a tad upset. After some meditation and training under the guidance of his master, Jackie sets off for a rescue attempt.

Jackie carries no weapons and must fight his way through five levels of nasties (snakes, tigers, ninjas, dragons and even a few turtles, to name a few) with punches and kicks for the most part. Jackie also has a limited supply of "psycho waves" that can be hurled at oncoming enemies, but they must be carefully rationed.

Only one player may play, and starts the game with one life plus four continues. Each life contains six health points, and once you lose them, you lose a life and must continue from the beginning of the stage you were in. Additional lives/continues are given for finding hidden 1-ups, for collecting 100 "purple jades" from slain enemies or from the bonus areas.

The bonus areas are hidden throughout the game and can provide Jackie with additional health and fireballs, as well as the aforementioned continues. These are tough to find, with only a ringing sound to be heard when Jackie is nearby. By jumping

Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu has its niche for players looking for a good solid game.

and kicking in the immediate area, a bell appears that will transport Jackie and his master to one of four possible bonus areas, each of which contains a different challenge for Jackie to test his skills against.

Friendly frogs are also scattered throughout the game, and, when punched (what a way to greet your friends!), they will either cough up a health power-up or one of four attack power-ups. These special power-ups are limited, so when they run out, it's time to go frog-bashing once again.

Game play consists predominantly of horizontal scrolling in one direction or the other, with areas of vertical scrolling as well. Each area is divided into several sections, and at the end of each area is a nasty boss, of course. The action is pretty straightforward: Kill everything that moves, except the frogs, while trying to successfully navigate the natural obstacles that are equally as troublesome. You must travel through lands of snow, fire, waterfalls and even up into the clouds in pursuit of your girl.

While this isn't a particularly new concept, there aren't that many titles of this sort available for the TG-16 at this point, so it should be a welcome addition for product-starved players.

The graphics are pretty good, if somewhat bland in some areas, and the scrolling and animation are excellent all the way through—no flickering/slowdown that I saw. The musical soundtrack is very good, and didn't get on my nerves at all. It changes frequently, and makes a nice backdrop for the wild screams of Jackie as he thrashes about.

The difficulty is such that even better players will still spend some time making progress. It's not that the areas are so hard, but the struggle to ration your health and continues while searching for the bonus areas along the way keeps you on your toes.

Good game play is what kept me coming back for more, as well as the convulsions that Jackie goes through when he croaks. While it's not



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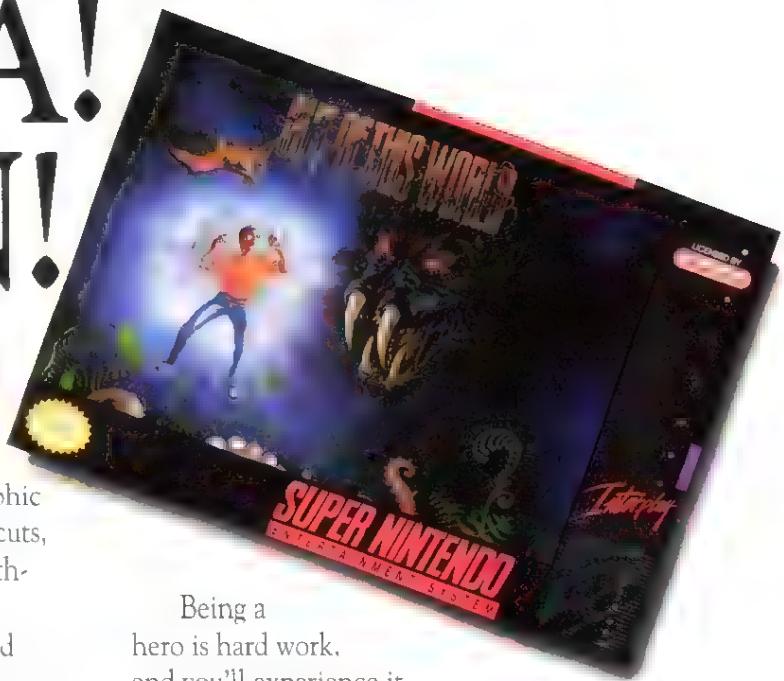
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King Salmon

SAGE'S CREATION
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ah, fishing—relaxing, leisurely, the second-favorite sport (besides golf) of people who have nothing better to do. In the best tradition of angling lore, I hereby present my review of *King Salmon* in the form of a shipboard journal.

7:00: How do I equip my laser cannons? I need them to destroy the other boats. And what are those dark blobs skimming beneath the water's surface? Are those the monsters?

7:05: A quick glance at the manual informs me that *King Salmon* is not, in fact, an action game but a fishing game. My mistake.

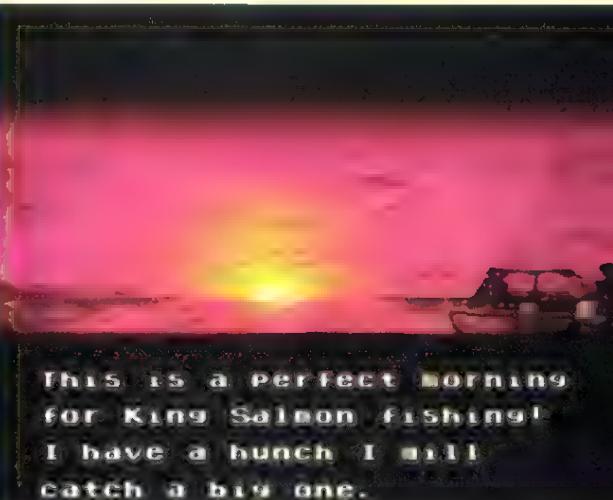
7:30: More from the manual: Apparently I'm participating in something called the "Salmon Derby," which takes place in and around Vancouver, Canada. Well it's not Zorg the Python Galaxy, but Canada is...kinda exotic. I guess. I mean, if you don't get out much.

9:00: Nothing much to report. Just trolling up and down, up and down, up and—holy haddock!—something moved! No, wait, that was just my cat jumping on the TV set.

10:00: A catch! A catch! A school of salmon swims under my lure; then, suddenly there's this fisherman guy in the lower left-hand corner of the screen, grunting and heaving and looking like he's about to have a coronary. I pound frantically on all the buttons, but the salmon swim away, farther and farther and.... Then, just when it appears my fisherman guy is about to keel over for good, this laconic message flashes: "Your line's been cut." Who?? How?? Has some ungodly force of evil invaded our friendly neighbor to the north?

10:05: "How to Pump Your Rod," reads the appropriate section of the manual. Maybe later.

King Salmon, by Sage's Creation, is definitely one of the most unusual video games to come along in awhile.



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11:00: Mind starting to wander. I think of some other video-game concepts the folks at Sage's Creation might want to explore: Curling? Horseshoes? World Champion Birdwatching?



12:00: King Salmon's music, mildly annoying to begin with, blossoms into a constant irritant—it's like the soundtrack to one of those off-brand travelogues (*Dairy Farming in North Dakota*) they used to show in movie theaters when I was growing up.

2:00: I notice that the game's clock, set in the upper right-hand corner of the screen, runs about twenty times faster than normal. Is this an accurate reflection of reality? Does your average fisherman, after spending an

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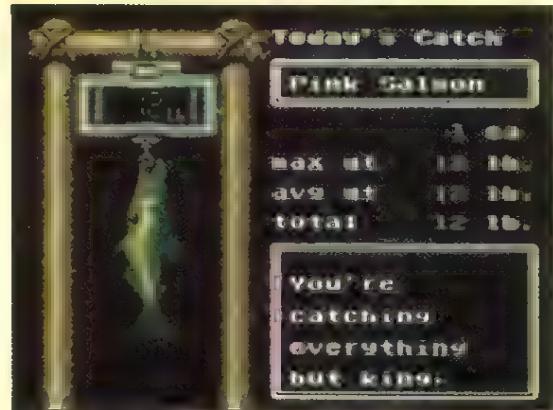
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entire day trolling some godforsaken river, say to himself, "Gee, that was so much fun it seemed like only an hour"?

3:00: Time for another catch! I've studied the manual this time, and I'm ready! I'm using a reflective-metal spinning spoon lure, my line is set to 440 feet and I've got my moves down cold—up D to set my hook, left D to pump my rod, C to reel in, A to replenish strength. I surely pity the poor fish who dares nibble at my Lure of Death.

3:30: A fearsome battle! I've hooked a hundred-pound salmon that takes my line out to 550 feet, dives, nearly swamping the boat, and resurfaces with an impish expression on its face, as if to say, "Look, I don't give a damn about up D and left D and C and A! You're way out of your league here; get outta the river and let some *real* fishermen have some fun!"

3:55: "Your line's been cut."

4:00: Enough fishing for one day. Time for Oprah.

—Bob Strauss

Sage's Creation

12062 Valley View St., Suite 250
Garden Grove, CA 92645
(714) 893-0309

DinoCity

ITEM

For the Super NES (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Kids love 'em. Plastic toys, cartoons and, of course, video games—remember *Joe and Mac*?—all feature them. In what may be a growing genre, *DinoCity* presents two young dinosaur fanatics named Timmy and Jamie, who get more than they bargained for when they decide to watch a videotape at Timmy's house.

Timmy's parents are scientists, and what he mistakes as a large-screen TV in the family laboratory is actually an experimental transfer device that, when activated, transfers the two into the video that they had been preparing to watch.

Worried? Nah. Excited? Yes! They quickly team up with two friendly dinosaurs, Rex and Tops, and decide to help them with their mission of fighting an evil bunch of Neanderthals called "Rockys."

The Rockys have stolen a fuse that has the power to blow the dinosaurs to the moon, and you must recover it to save this prehistoric land and its inhabitants. Complete the mission, and you will be able to return to the laboratory and your own time.

Either one or two players may participate, with players alternating as one or the other dies. Players work as a team with their dinosaur, and are able to climb off of their mount at most any time. Both players are equipped with a "stun" weapon for defense, which will temporarily freeze an enemy in place. Tops has the ability to fling "flying tools," while Rex has a punch and tail slap to inflict damage. Both dinosaurs may also do damage by landing upon some enemies. The abilities of both dinosaur and rider are needed, however, as teamwork is the key to success.

The game is divided into six stages of five areas each. You will always begin a stage from the same area, but afterwards



DinoCity, by Irem, is a well-crafted and fun game to play.

the order may differ. At the end of an area are two doorways, one usually more difficult to reach than the other. The easier one will always simply lead to the next area within the stage, while the harder one will either lead to a different area than the first door or possibly a bonus area. At the end of each stage is a boss or bosses, which, while not usually that difficult to defeat, usually require some thinking.

Each player/dinosaur team starts with three lives, three health hearts and three continues. Special items consist of health-replenishing hearts, 1-ups and dinosaur eggs, 50 of which award an extra life. These are scattered throughout the game and in the bonus areas. Upon completing a stage, a password is given that will allow you to start from the beginning of that stage when entered.

DinoCity's controls are straightforward, and its objectives are easy to discern, though they gradually become harder to conquer as the stages progress. I found some of the challenges similar to other SNES

games that have come out recently, but, overall, the game still feels fresh. Excellent background graphics and interesting critters are supported by equally excellent and changing music.

A downside exists, however, and it is an all-too-familiar one: graphics slowdown. It occurs mainly when the graphics rotation and scaling are used, and, unfortunately, does hamper playability in many areas.

The game play doesn't become impossible, but retiming your reflexes as the action jerks between different speeds can be maddening at times to say the least. Pretend it's a wrinkle in the

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Kw Kraze	12 20	Lakers vs Cel ls	14 34	Lakewood	20 37	Wings Of Wor
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space/time fabric due to the experimental nature of the transfer device, and that may relieve some of the frustration.

The areas of each stage are interesting and well designed, with as much challenge from the enemies as from the landscapes themselves, and the game play flows well from stage to stage.

The steadily increasing difficulty is spread evenly enough throughout the game so that it should keep players of all skills interested for some time. The different abilities of the two dinosaurs also contribute to its longevity, as Rex's offensive strengths are not as great, and therefore make the strategy much different when using him in the game.

Again, other than the bothersome slowdown in a few areas, I found *DinoCity* well crafted and fun to play—and I'm not even a dino-freak.

—B.W.

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Andro Dunos

SNK
For the Neo-Geo (\$179)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I'm dictating this review into a tape recorder while I play SNK's latest Neo-Geo title, *Andro Dunos*. If I'm not mistaken, this is the first time in the history of VG&CE that a game review is being written while the reviewer is actually playing the game...you know, at the same time. Let's hope it gives you a good impression of the

game. With me is Andy...

Andy: Hello.

...and this is a shoot-'em-up for one or two players, so we're going to tackle it in two-player mode. Andy will be offering his comments as well.

Okay, let's just jump right into the game here. It's a side-scrolling shooter in which the player controls a spaceship with four different types of weapons. Most of the enemies and backgrounds are metallic objects, but some of the later levels get into a more organic look.

Andy: Hey, look at this. Did you see how the floor was rippling before that centipede burst out of there?

Yeah, that was a pretty cool effect. I like those glowing green hallways in the alien base, too—where the enemy ships scale out of the background.

(Frantic button pushing is heard as the players try to blast through the middle of the game.)

Onlooker: Hey, is this *Andro Dunos*? Wow...what's the object of this game?

Well, you fly around in these spaceships...

Andy: ...and you die!

Frequently. You try to grab these power-up items...

Andy: ...and you can't use 'em, 'cause you get killed right away!

Onlooker: Wow...that looks pretty cool. Can I try it when you guys are finished?

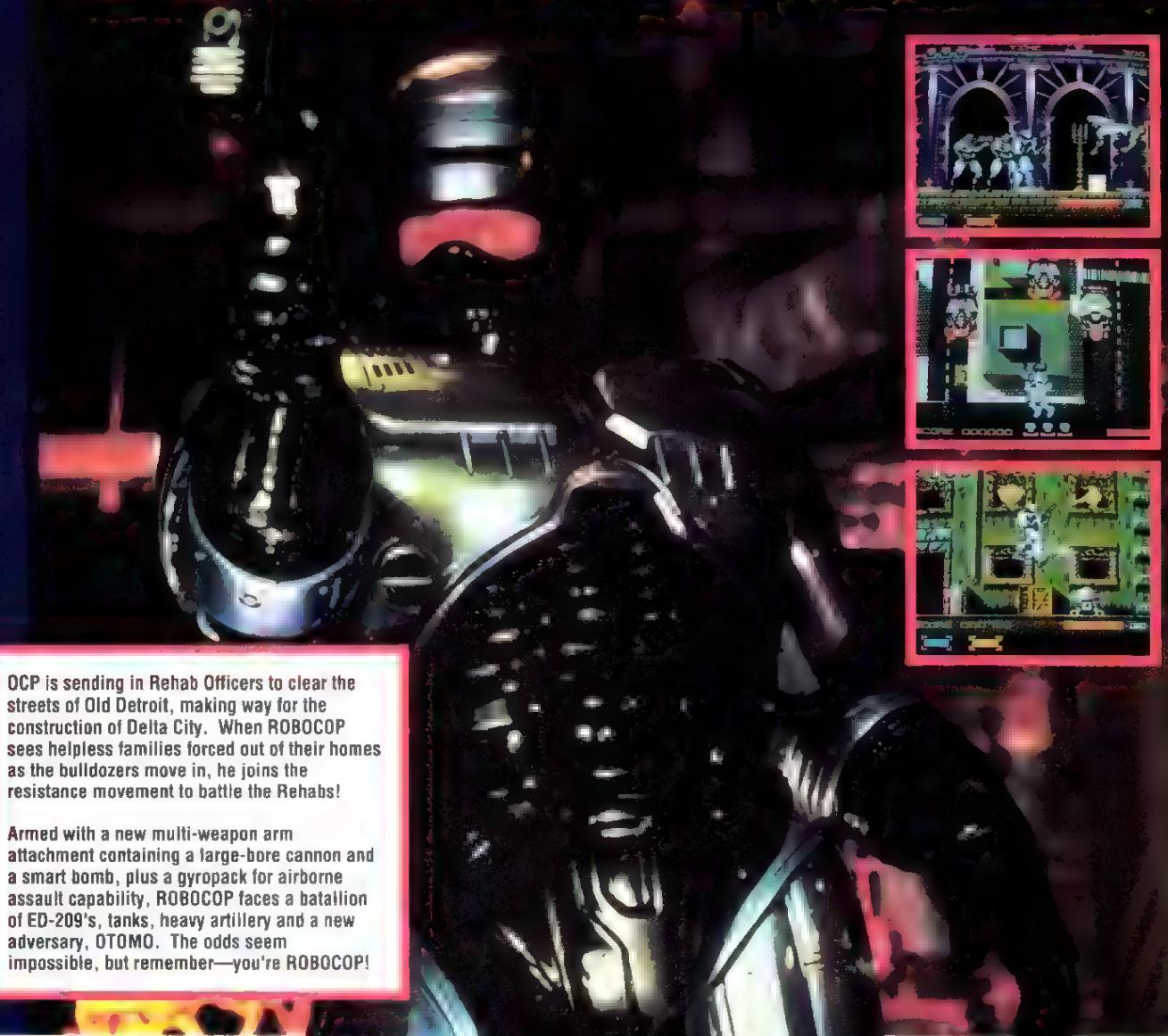
Andy: Sure. It doesn't look like we're going to last much longer.

The game handles pretty smoothly, although you never do get any really powerful weapons.

Andy: Well, there's the "monster shot," which you can use by holding the A button down, but you can only do it a few times. You know, the two-player game seems much more chal-



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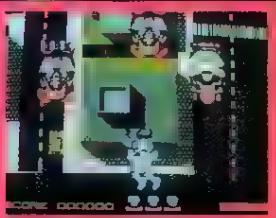
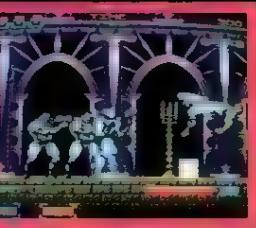
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The name of the game

OCEAN

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SNK's Andro Dunos for the Neo-Geo is a frantic shooter that will leave you with the feeling after playing that you just worked out at the gym.



lenging—there aren't enough power-ups for the two of us...

...which is a shame, because the later levels are pretty tough—some of them impossibly so. And there really aren't a lot of exciting enemies or backgrounds.

Andy: Yeah, it seems as though the people who are designing Neo-Geo games think they can make a game better by putting more enemies on the screen. In reality, they are only making them more difficult.

Agreed. I think it's important to mention that the slowdown problems in SNK's other recent shoot-'em-up, *Last Resort*, are not present in *Andro Dunos*. There's no flicker, either—it's a pretty clean-looking game.

Andy: But it's not as ambitious as Last Resort, even though the theme and some of the locations are similar.

Yeah, most of the backgrounds have only two scrolling planes, and even some of the boss characters are kind of blah. Hey, is this the end boss we're shooting at here—this brain guy with the missiles?

Andy: It should be...there are supposed to be only seven levels. Whoa! (sarcastically) Oh, sure, that's fair!

(For five minutes straight, the room is filled with the clicking sounds of joystick buttons that are in dire need of some type of auto-fire switch.)

Oh, it's not dead yet. Are those supposed to be bits of brain he's throwing at us, or are they raspberries? It looks like he's finally going down...yes!

Andy: See ya!

So what's your opinion? I thought it was okay, just a little too tough.

Andy: Yeah, not bad, but not very imaginative. If you're going to release R-Type clones, one after another, you really should try to do something different with the idea.

Hey, is this the ending? No big cartoon, just a bunch of Japanese names scrolling up the screen? I'm disappointed—I think we deserve some kind of reward for all that hard work.

Onlooker: Hey, look what it says—"Please try the next stage!"

Hmmm.... It looks like we get to play through the game again at a higher difficulty level. You wanna keep going?

Andy: No thanks. My arm is about to fall off!

—C.B.

SNK Home Entertainment Inc.
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Side Pocket

DATA EAST
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

For my money, one of the great mysteries of the video-game business is why there should be 57 golf and baseball and football simulations—all of which play exactly the same—and only one 16-bit billiards title, the sole representative of the one sports category that could benefit from a little competition. After all, probably as many people have played pool at one time or another as have suffered through Little League, and, believe me, pool is a lot more fun (as well as being one of the few sports that can be practiced alone, without the risk of humiliation).

As you may already have guessed, I'm a big billiards fan, which I suppose can be attributed to the fact that I grew up with a full-sized table in my house. (I once had a run of 25 straight, including break; the

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CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD

high point of a relatively dull childhood.) What I find so appealing about the game is its mathematical rigor—if your aim is off by one millimeter, if you miscalculate the angle off the cushion by even a tenth of a degree, you can forget that three-six combination into the corner pocket.

Which, I'm afraid, is precisely the reason I find *Side Pocket* so disappointing. You see, the folks at Data East unaccountably decided to retain the same clunky, follow-the-dotted-line aiming system as the original 8-bit NES game, meaning there are only about five or six places you can hit any given ball—compared to the dozens (perhaps hundreds) in real-life pool. This dotted-line monstrosity actually makes it possible to re-create an entire game from scratch—just aim the ball the exact same way, use the exact same english and pay close attention to the power meter, and you can duplicate a rack from beginning to end. Now I know video games aren't expected to re-create the world in every detail, but this is a physical impossibility. Haven't the programmers ever studied quantum physics?

But take heart, prospective hustlers—the news isn't all bad. *Side Pocket's* graphics and sound effects are top-notch; the *clank* of colliding balls is utterly convincing, as is the rhythmic flicker of their little white number-dots as they roll down the table. I like the scoring system, which rewards points for sinking balls in succession or numerical order; I don't like the "power-up" features, such as balls with reduced friction and flashing pockets. (The message this sends, intended or not, is that pool is so intrinsically boring that it needs to be snazzed up for the game-playing public.) The music is strictly white-bread jazz, but it's basically harmless; and the less said about the trick-shot option the better: I would gladly forego three-cushion massé shots between beer bottles for the ability to aim the ball with more precision.



Side Pocket's graphics and sound effects are top-notch, though it is strictly a 16-bit conversion of an 8-bit game.

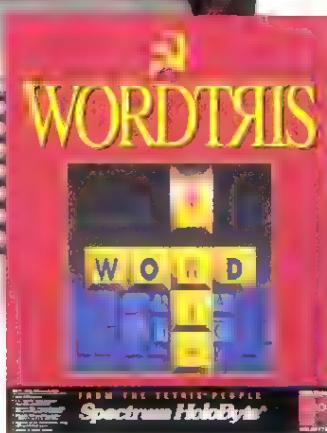
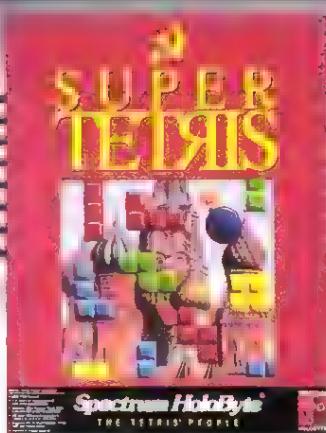
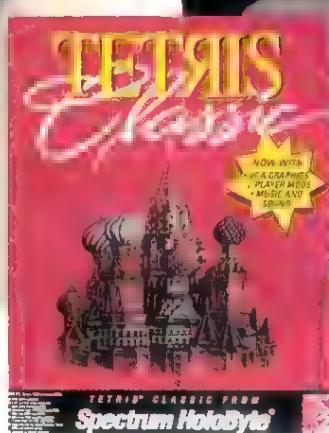
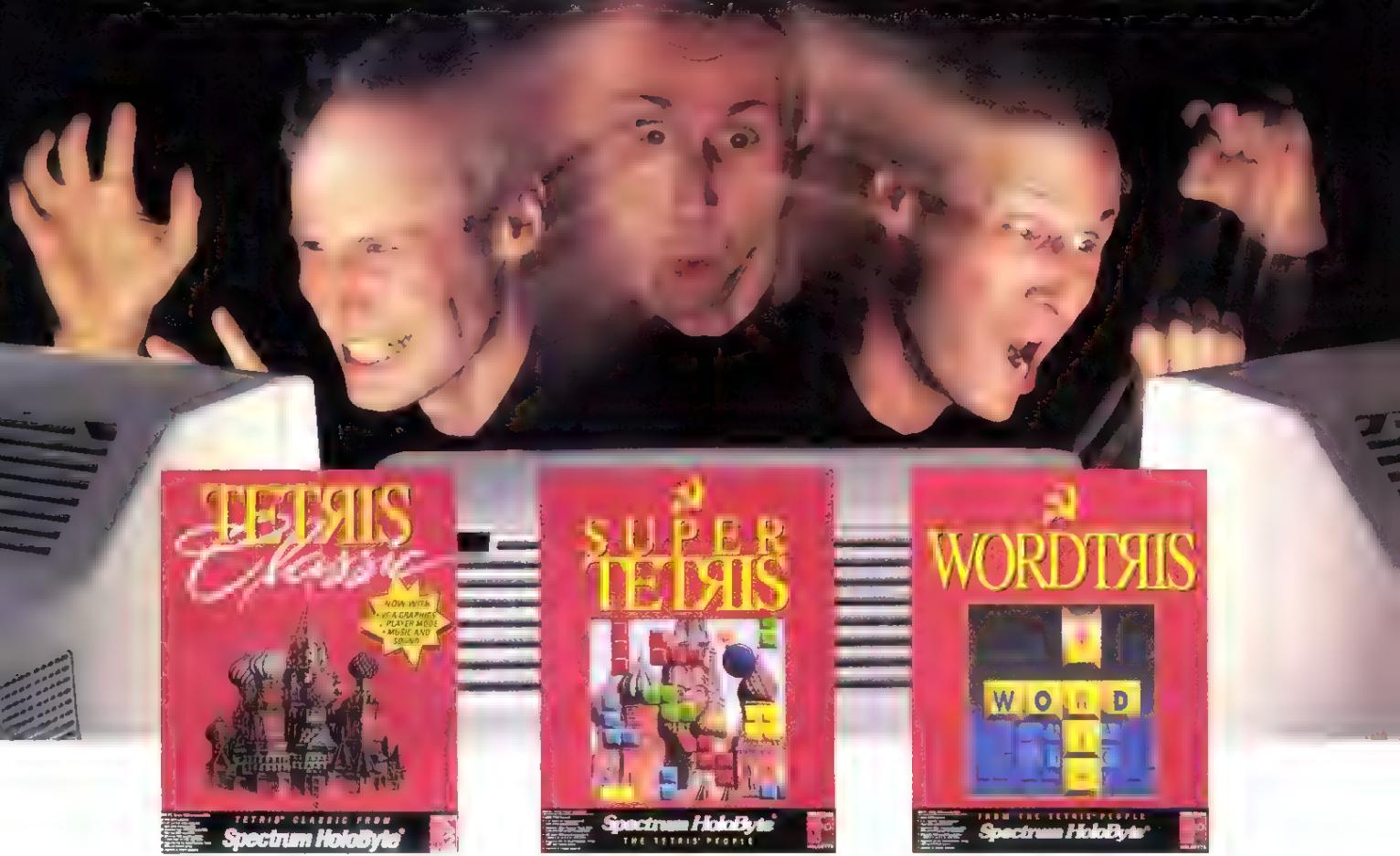


What the sport of billiards really deserves—and I suspect the Super NES could handle this a lot better than the Genesis—is a scaling, rotating, first-person-perspective video game that gives players the feeling of actually walking around the table and sinking balls in quick succession. It's already been done in Hollywood—*The Color of Money*, thanks to director Martin Scorsese, is one of the most dynamic pool movies ever made. But hey, don't blame Data East—if nobody puts any competitive pressure on them, why *shouldn't* they be content to produce a minimal, 16-bit conversion of their five-year-old NES game?

—B.S.



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WWF Wrestlemania Steel Cage Challenge

LJN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$47.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do the other kids laugh at you for playing video games? Are you tired of being a wimp, wasting your hours in front of the TV with such nerds as Mario, Link and Simon? Well, fret no more. With LJN's *WWF Wrestlemania Steel Cage Challenge*, you can shed that pencil-neck-geek image and become Hulk Hogan, Rowdy Roddy Piper, Macho Man Randy Savage or any of ten WWF superstars.

WWFWSCC gives you literally dozens of ways to mash the competition to a pulp. You can play one-on-one and tag-team matches against the computer or with another player—either ganging up, tag-team style, against the computer or against each other. There are three skill levels and a choice of a standard ring or a steel cage, where the rules change slightly. You'll be hard put to find a more flexible wrestling game.

The ten WWF stars, shown in small digitized portraits, have different abilities. Some have clear weight advantages, but others are stronger or are skilled at various moves. The Hulkster is probably the best all-around competitor. Wrestlers can even climb out of the ring and do battle on the floor of the arena.

There are roughly 16 offensive moves, from the standard kicks, punches, stomps and slams, to more advanced techniques such as clotheslines, shoulder butts and aerial maneuvers. I found that it was safer and more effective to stick to the standards—which are less interesting but faster to execute—than the complicated setup moves that require rebounding off the ropes or climbing the turnbuckles. Some simple moves were tough to perform, due to what appears to be sluggish or mushy game response. For instance, hitting the B button and pressing down with the pad or stick lets you pin a

WWF Wrestlemania Steel Cage Challenge gives players dozens of ways to mash the competition.

downed opponent (which must be held for three *loooong* seconds). The actions must be *absolutely* simultaneous or the move won't work; you'll end up trying a move two or three times before the game recognizes it.

The basic strategy is to get the advantage in a clinch, do a lot of punching and kicking to tire him out (which will make him stay flat on the mat longer once you down him), slam him to the mat, then quickly climb the nearest turnbuckle and pounce. Using this strategy allowed me to win the WWF World Championship fairly quickly.

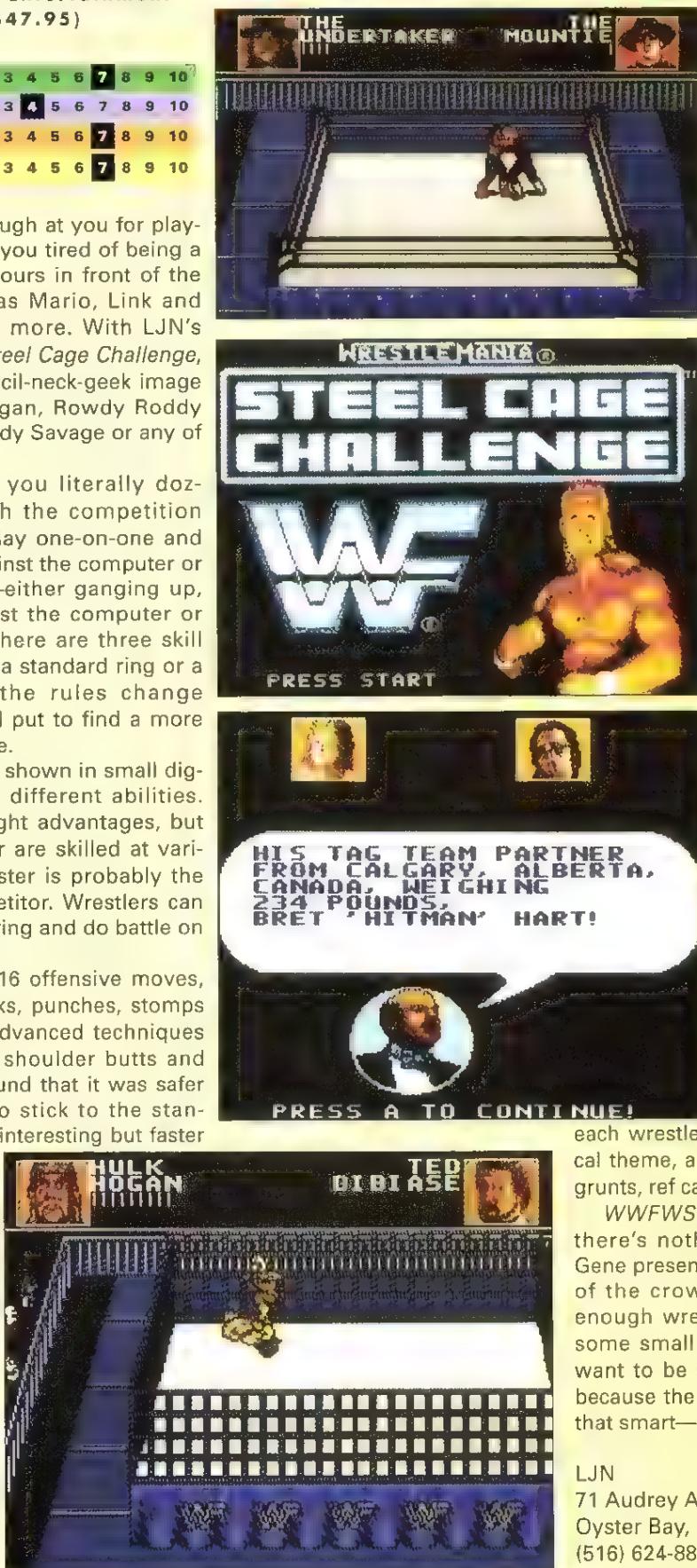
Now, don't be confused; this isn't real WWF wrestling. If it was, you'd be able to select the outcome of the match *before* it starts. (Oooh, I'm in trouble now!) No, this is a game of skill. All moves must be very carefully aimed or you'll miss and possibly end up flat on your back. An energy level displays how much stamina you've got left; the manual fails to explain why, just when you're about to finish off an opponent, his energy level suddenly becomes full again.

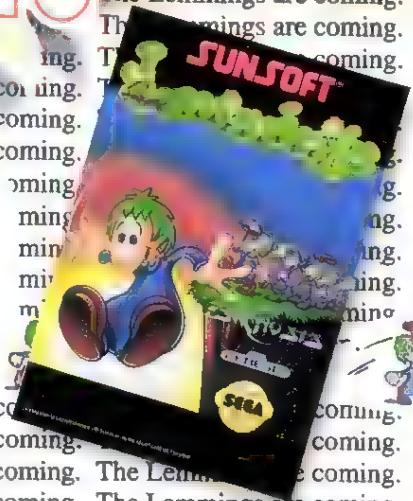
The figures of the wrestlers are small, and you have to rely on the differences in color between opponents in order to tell them apart. When they're in a clinch, it's often hard to tell who has the advantage. But the moves look pretty good, particularly the flying leaps. Sound effects are good; each wrestler has his own authentic musical theme, and there are plenty of digitized grunts, ref calls and crowd sounds.

WWFWSCC is a must for WWF fans; there's nothing quite like having Mean Gene present you as a winner to the cheers of the crowd. For others, it's a decent enough wrestling game, marred only by some small control problems. You'll also want to be sure to have a second player, because the computer opponents aren't all that smart—another touch of authenticity.

—Josh Mandel

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD

CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Ka-Blooey

KEMCO

For the Super NES (\$59.95)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ridiculing *Ka-Blooey* is almost too irresistible: "Ka-Blooey is a bomb!" and so on. Cynics are going to have to back off, though. *Ka-Blooey* is a sleeper surprise. It's not only one of the few puzzle titles available for the SNES, it's also a real gaming treat.

The object is to set off all the bombs on a level, without engulfing your character in the explosions. For lack of a provided name in the instructions, this character is "Mr. Eggplant Head." Monsieur Head walks on the tiled floors of the puzzle levels, detonating bombs, moving them to better locations or doing whatever is necessary to bring about a successful "big bang."

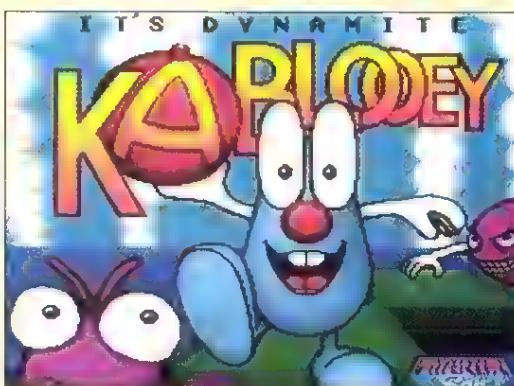
The principle behind *Ka-Blooey* is simple, even if its execution isn't. It's the old "better mousetrap" theory, where one mechanical occurrence results in a series of consequences that should eventually lead to a desired result. The result in *Ka-Blooey* is the complete explosion of all bombs on a level.

Bombs on a tile come in one of three types. A bomb that is set off will detonate another that is right next to it. Depending on the bomb's size, it could set off one that's further away. The larger a bomb's size, the greater its explosive range will be.

Bombs destroy the tiles that they are on and most around their vicinity. Again, bigger bombs are more destructive. This is why it's crucial that Mr. Eggplant Head not be standing on a tile that is certain to go up in smoke—and it is largely the challenge of *Ka-Blooey*.

Like the bombs, tiles come in a variety of types. Tiles riveted with screws are impervious to explosions, while those that appear

Kemco's *Ka-Blooey* has 130 levels of logic-minded puzzles for the player to solve.



cracked will crumble away after you step off of them. Iced tiles, as expected, will cause your character to slip to the next tile, and bombs on slotted tiles can be relocated to an adjoining slotted tile.

Other features include temples that block a bomb's exploding range, a teleportation tile, switches that, when activated, make other tiles appear and robots for Mr. Head to use in operations that often have kamikaze results. Land mines, spinning tiles, remote-controlled bombs and giant spores that nosh on eggplants add to the game's overall equation.

Think of the puzzles as simplified computer circuits, and the bombs as the path for the electricity that runs through it. All other elements in the game serve as components on the board. With this in mind, you'll have a pretty good idea what *Ka-Blooey* is.

On specific details, the sound is good yet pointlessly overproduced (especially the sexy female voice announcing "Player 1...get ready!"). But *Ka-Blooey* has enough logic-minded puzzle smarts (130 levels of it) to outshine even this one little brain-drainer aspect.

—Howard H. Wen

Kemco
8415 154th Ave. NE
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 869 8000

The Terminator

VIRGIN

For the Sega Genesis (\$59.95)

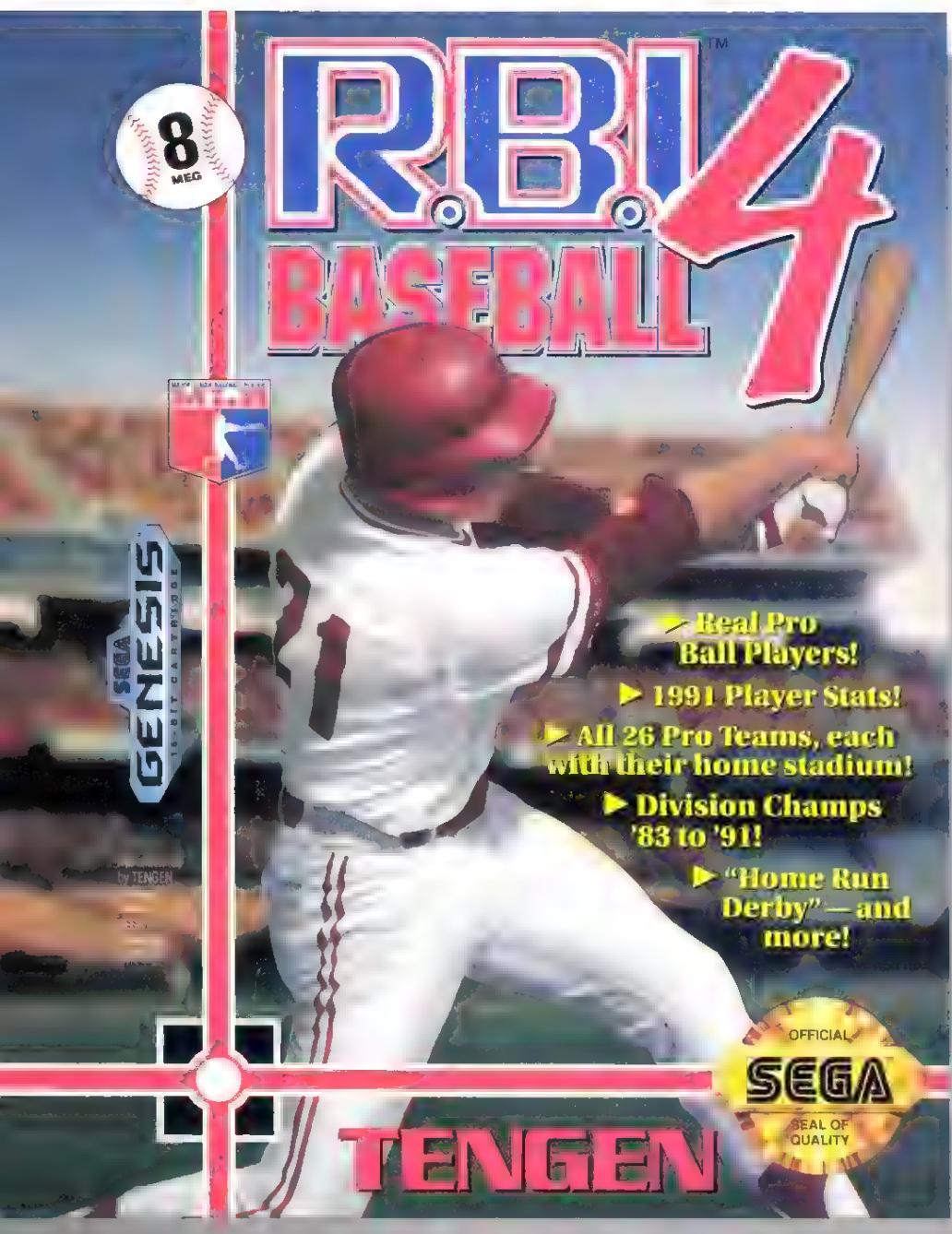
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

For the two readers who haven't seen the 1984 sci-fi movie upon which this game is based, here's the story. A cyborg termini-



continued on page 62

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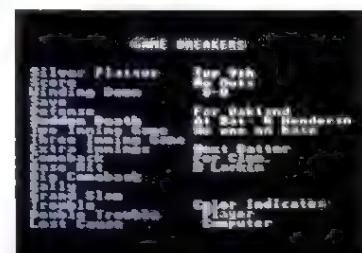
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MODE	ACTION MODE, ONE PLAYER MODE, TWO PLAYER MODE
# OF GAME PLAYERS	UP TO TWO PEOPLE
OPERATION LEVELS	STANDARD, MASTER
COMPUTER LEVELS	BEGINNER, MEDIUM, EXPERT
AVAILABLE SPORTS	KUNG-FU, KARATE, KICK BOXING, MARTIAL ARTS, BOXING, WRESTLING, DOUBLE SWORDSMANSHIP
CHARACTERS	7 DIFFERENT CHARACTERS TO CHOOSE FROM
SKILLS	AS MANY AS 76 DIFFERENT SKILLS IN ALL
CHOOSING THE SKILLS	YOU CAN CHOOSE THE SKILLS YOU WANT TO USE.
	YOU CAN CHOOSE EITHER A SINGLE MATCH OR THREE MATCH GAMES.



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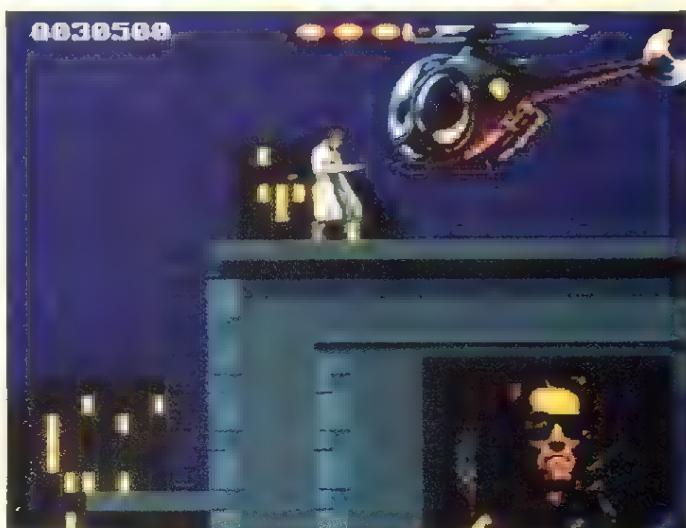
continued from page 58

nator is sent into the past to kill Sarah Connor, whose son is the leader of a future war between humans and renegade machines. The humans of the future send back Kyle Reese to protect Sarah from the cyborg. A simple premise and a knockout movie. Unfortunately, this four-level run-and-shoot game doesn't live up to the excitement of the film.

The first level takes place in the year 2029. Your goal is to find and destroy the Skynet computer that controls the machines, then enter Skynet's "time-displacement chamber" to zap yourself into the past. You'll get to fight terminators (that look nothing like Arnold) and shoot down hunter-killer planes along the way.

In the second level, you're in 1984. Armed with a shotgun, you have to find Sarah Connor in the seedy Tech Noir nightclub. Your enemies here are street thugs and police officers. (The politically correct programmers designed the game so that policemen aren't killed when you shoot them, merely stunned for a few seconds.)

Level 3 has you scampering through a police station where you and Sarah have been taken. You start in front of your jail cell, still equipped with your shot-



The Terminator's graphics are well done, particularly the narrative screens that appear between levels.

gun. (Wouldn't the police have relieved Kyle of his shotgun before throwing him into his cell? Just a thought.) Your goal is to run through the police station and find Sarah before the terminator does.

The fourth and final level is set in a warehouse. You have to blow the terminator's legs off and lure him underneath a steel press to destroy him and win the game. (Even though Kyle's alive and well at the end of the level, the final reward screen says that he died, as he did in the movie.)

The major problem with *The Terminator* is that it's simply too easy. I beat the game less than two hours after starting to play. Increasing the difficulty setting doesn't make enough of a difference (a few items change locations on the first level and a few more enemies appear in the first three levels). The lack of challenge is even more of a problem when you consider how short the four levels are. The game can be played, from start to finish, in roughly ten minutes.

The Terminator's graphics are well done, particularly the narrative screens that appear in between each level. These screens were digitized from the movie and

then graphically retouched. The sound effects are also nice, although the sound sample of Arnold saying "I'll be back" is somewhat distorted. Of course, the tasty audiovisuals don't make up for the lack of game play or challenge.

Listen to me now and believe me later: *The Terminator* is way too easy and way too short. It's probably worth renting for a day and checking it out for yourself.

—Z.M.

Virgin Games
18061 Fitch Ave.
Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 833-8717

Adventure Island III

HUDSON SOFT
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Master Higgins, hero of the *Adventure Island* series, is not only fickle, but boy, the guy sure doesn't know a thing about hanging onto girlfriends. Every game sees him with a new main squeeze, and every

game sees her spirited away to some horribly remote location guarded by hundreds of venomous creatures. So he goes in search of his latest girlfriend, leaping and ducking and swimming and throwing things. He'll die a thousand deaths and battle handfuls of bosses. Maybe Master Higgins

should take a vow of celibacy and find a less stressful hobby...like maybe bungee jumping.

Adventure Island III fits the dictionary definition of the phrase, "more of the same." Oh, there are some very incidental differences, such as the fact that the girlfriend (Jeannie Jungle) has been kidnapped by aliens, not by the usual Evil Witch Doctor. But, as in *Adventure Island II*, there are eight islands to traverse in your quest to find Jeannie, and the play action is virtually identical.

As you travel, you'll find eggs—some hidden, most not—that contain skateboards, boomerangs, axes, time-stoppers, temporary invincibility, keys to bonus levels and dinosaurs. The dinosaurs will carry you, and usually provide you with greater firepower than either the axes or boomerangs. They'll also do you the favor of absorbing a hit from an enemy, because you ain't exactly Tarzan—if you're walking around without a dinosaur, one hit and you're history. Other treasures are hidden in unlikely places, so you need to use your weapon all through each sub-level to find everything. A few "bad eggs" contain potentially deadly dangers. Dinos and the other goodies can be salted away on a storage screen and used on subsequent levels.

There are eight islands (and nine bosses), but each island is made up of a half-dozen sub-levels, and nearly each level has at least one hidden bonus screen—and the bonus screens are *really* difficult! The sub-levels are short, yet all but the most skilled arcade players are bound to be left weeping and ragged by the relentless game play. It's not so much the quantity of enemies, but the tricky arrangement of obstacles, enemies and terrain that gives



Master Higgins is back, in Hudson Soft's *Adventure Island III*—not as elaborate or fancy as a *Super Mario Bros.* game, but just as much fun.

Adventure Island III has its high level of challenge. As with any good platform game, it's not how fast you can fire your weapon, it's knowing the precise moment to fire, and when to jump or duck. Sometimes you'll even want to avoid items that, on the face of it, seem to be helpful.

There's no way to select the level at which you start, but there is a sort of

continue feature that lets you restart the game with all of the dinosaurs, crystals and weapons you have in storage. It will *not* allow you to start from the level you last played. Fortunately, once you've conquered a sublevel, replaying it becomes fairly quick and painless.

The graphics of *Adventure Island III* are, as with the play, nearly identical to those of *Adventure Island II*. Which is to say they are serviceable and smoothly animated, but very low on detail. The same can be said of the music and sound effects, which are perfectly decent but not noteworthy.

It's not often that I enjoy a game enough to get *truly* frustrated...y'know, all that wonderful hair-pulling, pummeling on the joystick and yelling at anyone who even *looks* like he might step in front of the TV. *Adventure Island III* is such a game—not as elaborate or fancy as a *Mario Bros.* game, but just as much fun. Next time, though, I'd like to see a bit of originality...like having the girlfriend

track down a kidnapped Master Higgins.

—J.M.

Hudson Soft USA

400 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 515
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(415) 871-8895

Splash Lake

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-CD (\$49.99)

Sound/Music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Anyone who played Milton Bradley's *Don't Break the Ice* game while they were growing up should be able to grasp the object of *Splash Lake* fairly quickly. In that classic board game, players took turns tapping a hammer on a grid of white plastic blocks to try to knock them out of place without bringing on the collapse of the entire playfield.

TTI's newest CD-ROM title is a playful variation on that idea. As Ozzie the ostrich, you must peck at the blocks that float upon the lake and try to cause the collapse of the playfield—or at least the parts that you aren't currently standing on. Pursued by all sorts of loony enemies, threatened by a strict time limit and armed with nothing more than a sharp beak and the ability to jump over creatures, Ozzie certainly has his work cut out for him. If you own a TurboTap and a spare controller, you can get help from another ostrich in a two-player cooperative contest.

After every ten levels, there's a new episode in a series of brief animated intermissions called "Ostrich Theater." Many of the game's options—from the color of the ostriches to the pattern on the blocks—can be changed, and the built-in battery backup of the TurboGrafx-CD saves your game automatically each time you play.

Splash Lake's colorful graphics are definitely deceiving. Certain levels are so simply designed that it's hard to believe they'd give you any trouble—yet, somewhere around Stages 3-10, things start to get really challenging. There aren't any real puzzles in the game, but the patterns of the different enemies constantly force you to come up with new strategies at the drop of a hat.

Much more than anything else, I really am surprised that the vast storage capac-

ity of the CD-ROM was not used to supply the game with more than 60 levels. Boy, with all of that space, you'd think that the designers would have dreamed up a few hundred screen designs—or at least included a "construction set" that would

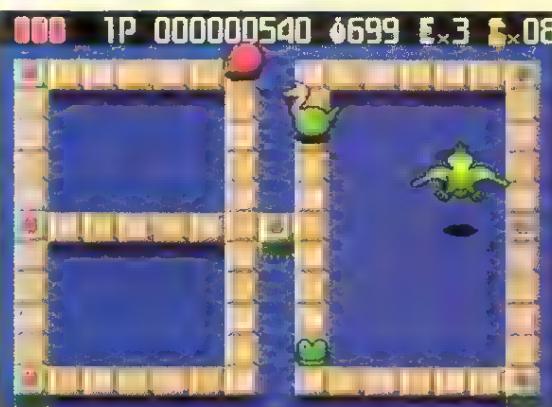
allow the player to design and play his or her own levels. To put it more bluntly, *Splash Lake* looks and plays like a HuCard. Was the full CD-ROM treatment really necessary?

To put all of these confusing issues aside, let's just say that the virtually percussion-free Danny Elfman-inspired CD background music is a nice "extra" that makes *Splash Lake* a hair better than it would have been on a HuCard. If nothing else, it's important to note that being released as a CD-ROM seems to have had little or no adverse effect on the game's suggested retail price.

If VG&CE handed out awards for the best one-screen-at-a-time-cute-puzzle-game-with-goggle-eyed-characters-running-around-on-blocks-surrounded-by-water...well, that'd be Irem's *Kickle Cubicle*, an underrated NES game that has also appeared on the PC Engine. But *Splash Lake* would definitely rate a close second, and its engaging game play and innocent charm make it a winner in my book.

—C.B.

Turbo Technologies Inc.
6701 Center Drive West,
Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045
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King of the Monsters 2: The Next Thing

SNK

For the Neo-Geo (\$199)

OUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In 1996, the monsters appeared. They battled each other for three years and unleashed devastation over the Earth. Only three survived. Now, in 1999, a new, unexpected, powerful alien force has appeared to oppose the old monsters. These new alien monsters threaten to take over the planet and impose their rule. That's the story line behind SNK's *King of the Monsters 2: The Next Thing*.

King of the Monsters 2 has three different types of games available: one-player, two-player cooperative and two-player competitive play.

There are three monsters to choose from (Super Geon, Atomic Guy and Cyber Woo) that are buffed-up super versions of previous monsters. Unfortunately, these are the only three available in the entire game, and you can't even choose from any of the seven new alien monsters. It might not have been a good feature in the one-player or two-player cooperative games, but it would have been a neat feature in the head-to-head game (e.g., Aqua Slug vs. Clawhead or Eiffelyte vs. Super Geon).

Each monster has his own special advantage. Atomic Guy has a speed advantage, Super Geon has the power advantage and Cyber Woo has the attacking advantage. Unlike the first game, power-ups are pretty abundant; taking out a building or mountain-side might reveal one. Besides power-ups, there is also a power-down, which, when collected, will cancel all previously collected ups. Also, in addition to having the



If you are looking for some good two player fun, check out SNK's *King of the Monsters 2*.

ability to grab a plane, tank or other moving vehicle, you can take hold of a building, rip it out of its foundation and toss it at your opponent.

There are a total of seven different battles, with bonus rounds available between some of the battles. Each takes place in a different location around the planet, as opposed to the first game, where they all occurred in Japanese cities. Only two of the battles are located in cities this time; the others are set in exotic locations, like the Grand Canyon or the Egyptian desert.

One of the major improvements *King of the Monsters 2* has over its predecessor is that the game designers have enlarged

the size of the characters and background significantly. The playfield, too, has been enlarged. No longer are you confined to a predefined ring roped off by an electric force field that bounces you away. As long as all of the monsters are in an area of the playfield together, you are free to move about.

King of the Monsters 2's character control mechanism could also have been a little more refined. Throughout the entire game there is a definite sense that you don't have complete control over your monster's movements. We tested this by placing two monsters near each other in the two-player head-to-head mode. Sure enough, they automatically latched onto each other without one button being pressed.

King of the Monsters 2 is an extremely fun game to play, especially if you play head-to-head against someone. I had the most fun just trashing and tossing buildings and other items. So when can we expect to see *King of the Monsters 3*?

—Mike Davila

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Super Adventure Island



Super Bowl



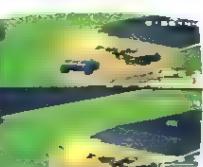
Arch Rivals



OutKast Ball park



Bases Loaded 3



RPM Racing



Kabooey



Bart vs. The Space Mutants



Contra III



OutKast Ball park



Desert Strike



Castlemania



Waialae Country Club



Where's Waldo



Sesame Street ABC 123

**Suddenly,
the place with
the games
everyone wants
is Sears.
Go figure.**



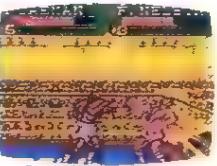
Tie & Max



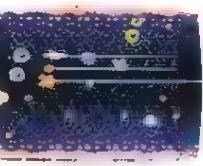
Olympic Gold



Monopoly



George Foreman Boxing



OutKast Ball park



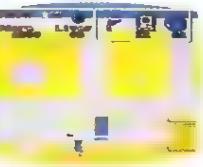
Magic Sword



Star Trek



Steel Empire



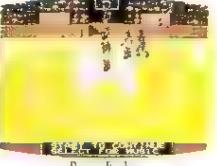
Home Alone



Amazing Spider-Man



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III



Roundball



Kingpin



NHL Hockey



Super Bases Loaded



Act Raiser



Madden 92



Buffalo



NBA All-Star Challenge 2



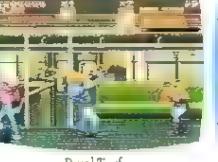
Leaderboard Golf

Where in Time is
Carmen SanDiego?

Out Of This World



Pit Fighter



Rival Turf



Darius Twin

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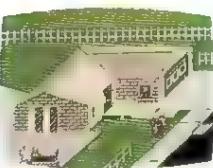
The Empire Strikes Back



Earth Defense Force



Paperboy 2



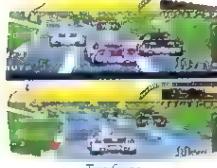
Paperboy 2 (NES)



Street Fighter II



Jordan vs. Bird



Top Gear



Gold Medal Challenge



Mystica Ninja



Road Rash



Sesame Street Countdown



Tim Toons



Jack Nicklaus Golf



Gargoyles Quest



Krusty's Fun House



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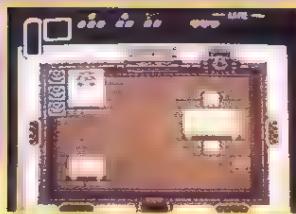
WORLD

DOCTOR

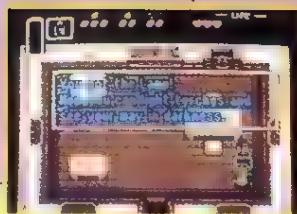
A Player's Guide To Zelda A Link to the Past

Zelda fans have waited long and patiently for the next chapter in their favorite video fantasy quest. At last, *Zelda III* is here, and it sure was worth the wait. The graphics are awesome, and dozens of hours of new adventuring await every dungeon explorer anxious to heft his sword once again.

So join us on this extraordinary quest into a strange and wonderful world. This month, we'll explore parts of Hyrule, as well as find our way through the first three palaces. Next month, we'll continue our quest and discover some fantastic new secrets.



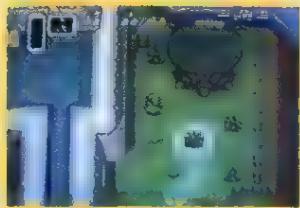
You'll start off comfy in your bed at home. The jar next to your bed contains hearts that can restore your life at any time. So plan to come back here often.



In the treasure chest in your room, you'll discover this valuable lamp, which will help you in the dungeons. Don't leave home without it!



After leaving your house, check the map to see what your destination is.



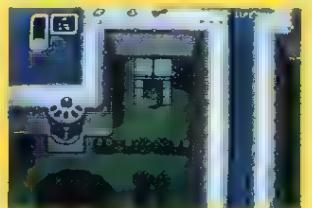
Around the side of Hyrule Palace you'll find this small bush surrounded by white tiles. Could this be the secret entrance?



Yes, it is the secret entrance! Down the hole you go.



Inside, you run into your father, who, though he's unhappy that you've left the safety of your house, gives you a sword to use.



After the secret passageway, you'll come out on Hyrule Palace's grounds. You now have to make your way to the castle's front entrance.



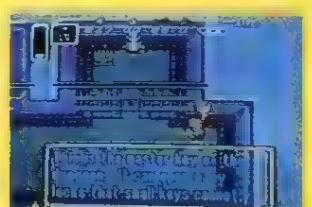
You can't get past this fiery doorway yet. Better come back later.



In the dungeon, you'll find many treasures. This one is the map, which will reveal to you all the secrets of the dungeon.



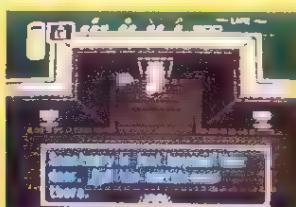
This chest contains the beginning map to the dungeon, which helps you to fight monsters while staying away from them.



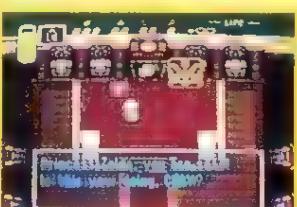
After fighting off the guard (he's really easy to beat), you'll get the master key. You'll find Zelda here, too, and set her free with the key.



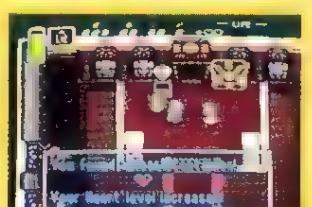
Sometimes you need to move blocks in order to get to doorways.



Pull the right-hand lever in this room. It opens the doorway to safety.



The old man is grateful for Zelda's return.



In his chest, you'll find a heart, which will increase your strength.



It's a rainy day, not a very good one for adventuring, but you have to rescue Zelda. On your way, make sure you look in all the bushes for valuable items, like rupees and hearts.



At Hyrule Palace's gate you get a rude greeting. Can't get in this way.



Inside the Hyrule Palace you'll begin your first dungeon quest.



Whenever adventuring in dungeons, make sure you keep a close eye on your map. It'll help you to avoid retracing your steps unnecessarily.



As you explore, the map will fill in, keeping track of everywhere that you have been.



Then, it's back to this castle room, which has a moveable ornamental shelf.



After moving the shelf, you'll enter a dark and dangerous dungeon. You'll need to use your lantern to light the fire bowls you'll find. The fire bowls give you light, but only for a short time.



Look for the treasure chest with the key.



Then, it's back out into the real world to find the elder in the village.



As always, your map tells you where to go.



Along the way, pull up bushes, looking for hidden holes like this one, which...

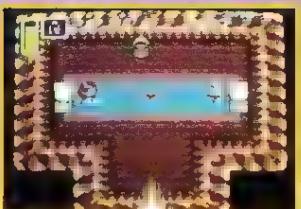




...may lead to nice surprises, like these fairies who'll heal you.



Also, look for shops where you can trade your hard-found rupees for some valuable merchandise.



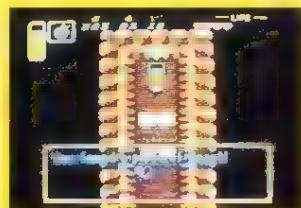
If you have a bottle to carry it in, the red potion is especially valuable, since it can restore your full life anytime.



Make sure you buy a bottle while you're in town. You'll need it to carry red potion.



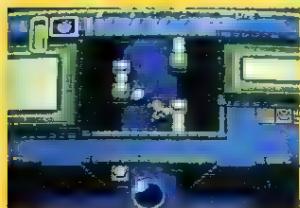
At first, it may seem impossible to get into this hole, but it's easy if you jump from the hill above.



And, after you get into the hole, you'll find a piece of heart.



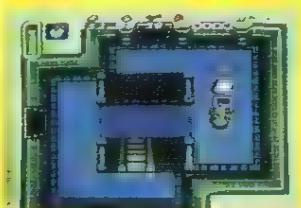
This room in the town requires carefully planned block-pushing to get to all the treasures. And...



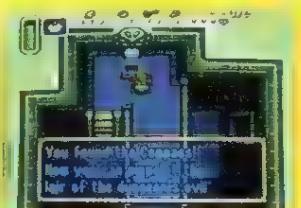
Your first major obstacle in Eastern Palace is this set of rolling balls. Time your run carefully.



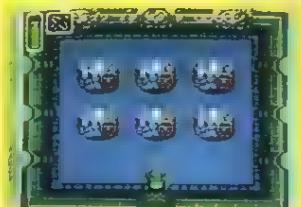
The switch under the center pot is the only way to open the door here. Watch out for the flying energy blob.



This dungeon, too, has a map and...



...a compass. They'll help you find your way to the boss.



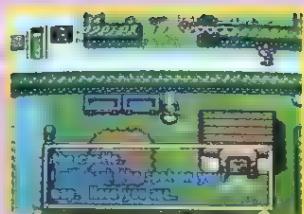
This dungeon's boss is a group of six guards. As they spin by you, keep swinging your sword and knocking them back. When they line up against the back wall, shoot them with your bow.



After you kill five of the guards, the last one will become downright ornery. Get into a corner for protection, and hack at him with your sword.



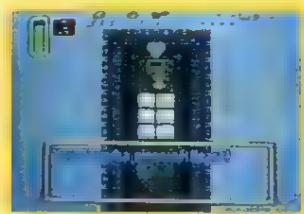
In the Village, start your search for the elder. Also, make sure you check out each house.



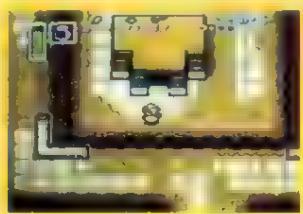
This little boy will tell you that the elder is no longer in the village. Luckily, the boy will also tell you where the elder has gone.



...the wall in the back can be bombed open, giving you access to all these treasure pots and...



...another piece of heart!



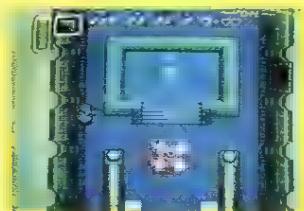
After you're through exploring the town, you'll find the elder in the northeast part of the land, in this little cabin.



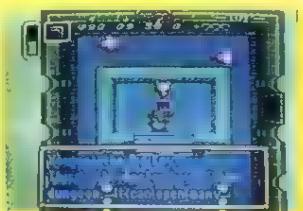
Make sure that you talk to the elder, since he has an interesting tale to tell.



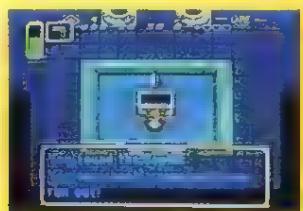
These special units built into the walls let you communicate with the elder, Sahasrahla.



At first it might seem that there's nothing interesting in this room. But kill all the monsters and move the pot that the four energy blobs are guarding, and...



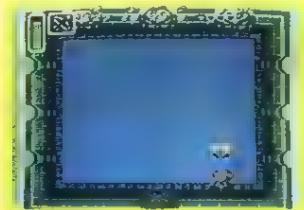
...you'll find a switch that will reveal this magic chest. In the chest, you'll find this dungeon's master key.



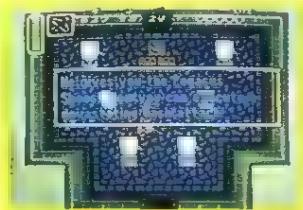
After getting the master key, you can open this big chest, which contains a valuable weapon: the bow.



When you defeat the last guard, you'll get one of the pendants, and...



...you'll also get another heart!



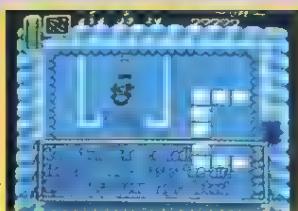
With the pendant, head back to see Sahasrahla, the elder, in his cabin. He'll give you the Pegasus Shoes, which will let you dash around like crazy.



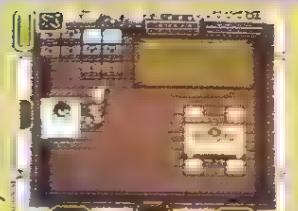
Then, it's back to the town. But on the way, do some more exploring. Inside this cave...



...you'll find fairies to heal you.



Now that you have the Pegasus Shoes, you are able to bash into this bookshelf and knock down the book.



The book will help you read signs in other languages.



...when you come back to her shop, you can get the Magic Powder.



In order to get into Desert Palace, you need to use the book and read the inscription on the pedestal.



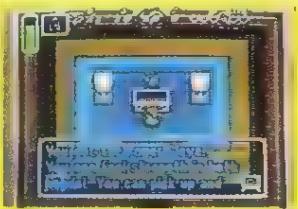
Desert Palace is infested with sand-burrowing monsters. So watch your step!



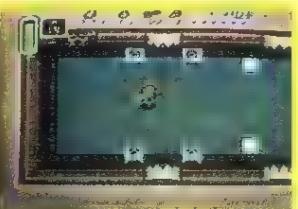
You'll need to be quick on your feet to avoid all the balls in this long room, but...



...a great reward lies at the end of it—the master key.



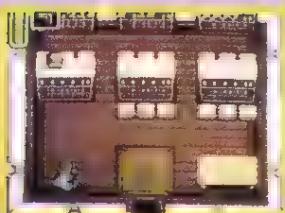
Deeper in the dungeon, you come across an even greater treasure. The Power Glove lets you pick up certain rocks, and thus gain access to more parts of Hyrule.



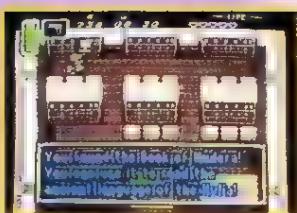
When you light the pots, the wall slides back, revealing a secret door.



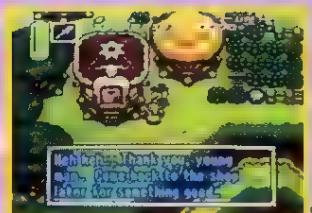
The dungeon keeper in Desert Palace is a group of three worms. Watch where they're about to come up, then line up your bow or Ice Rod and blast 'em. (You can hit them on the head, so aim carefully.)



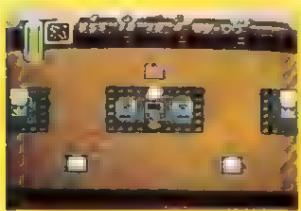
If you bomb out the wall to the left of the cave, you'll discover a cave containing the Ice Rod, another powerful weapon.



When you arrive in town, go see the sick girl. She'll loan you the bug net. Use it to catch bees and fairies, and store them in your jars.



When you do some more outside exploring, give this witch a mushroom, and...



As always, find the map and the compass.



In this strange room, you must push the proper block to open the door, all the while avoiding the shots of the room's guardian.



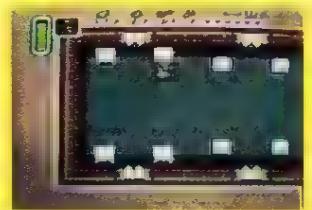
When you get the door open, these fairies will give you some badly needed healing.



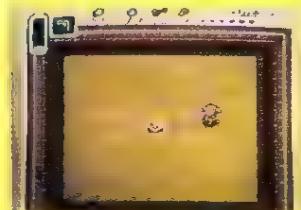
After exploring the first part of Desert Palace, you'll take a jaunt outside and...



...end up by this entrance, where you'll use the Power Glove to get the rocks out of your way.



There seems to be nothing special about this room, until you use your lamp to light the four fire pots found in the left part of the room.



When you run out of arrows and magic, use your sword to finish the worms off. After defeating the worms, you'll get another heart, and, of course...



...you'll get the second pendant. Stay tuned next month for more exciting adventures in Hyrule!



THE 1992 SUMMER CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

RECAP

Filling the dual role of journalists and exhibitors, the VG&CE staff descended on the 1992 Summer Consumer Electronics Show (SCES) held in Chicago, May 28-31. Adding excitement to this already hectic late-spring ritual was the fact that, for the first time, the public would be allowed to attend the last two days. Most exhibitors had a large assortment of worries about how the 98,720 consumers would react, especially since CES organizers made minimal attempts in their advertising blitz to inform consumers of the convention's No. 1 rule: Exhibitors were there only to display their products and to meet with one another; absolutely nothing could be purchased on the convention floor.

For VG&CE staffers, the public attendance was a mixed blessing. The four-day-long convention is generally the only time that editors can meet face-to-face with the more than 100 game manufacturers and preview their upcoming releases. Having thousands of extra individuals crowding the floor and display booths made keeping our full schedule twice as difficult. On the other hand, it was a great chance to meet the readers and explain in person the upcoming new staff changes and editorial improvements in VG&CE.

Among software manufacturers, opinions about having the public attend were directly related to how close to completion the finished games were. Some, such as Atlus with essentially finished products, like *Wacky Races*, would have liked potential buyers to

have a chance to play their games, and they felt confined behind Nintendo's portable walls and Armageddon security. Similarly, people playing Kaneco's *Chester Cheetah* might mistakenly believe that what they were playing was exactly what would be for sale at Christmas, and they might walk away with an unfairly negative opinion of the game. Many manufacturers who could not hide away like the Nintendo licensees, simply removed the controllers—allowing the public to watch the demos, but not to try out the unfinished games.

NINTENDO LEADS WAR ON CROWDS & PRICES

Nintendo must have realized that closing off so much of the exhibit to the public was poor public relations, so they constructed by far the most costly exhibit in all of McCormick North. Nintendo built several banks of SNESes, allowing the consumers to play the best SNES games programmed by Nintendo and their licensees. However, owners of the NES looking for continued support from Nintendo certainly didn't find it. The available displays were overwhelmingly SNES games, and Nintendo's contribution to the price war was the announcement of a special packaging of the SNES, with one controller and no software for \$99.95, the current price of the NES Action set.

By far the most impressive sight in Nintendoland was the monitor displaying a 3-D floating Mario head. Mario would talk to kids and their parents while a hidden camera and microphone broadcast their responses to a back booth where actor Charles A.



Above: "The main draw behind the Mario,"
Actor Charles A. Martin. Left: The Camera & Microphone Giveaway.



by David A. Bierwirth

John Schnyder

Martinet controlled the action. Wearing a helmet that mimicked his head and facial movements, and using a 3-D mouse to make Mario fly around the screen, Martinet mustered his gaudiest Italian accent to help distract crowds.

SNES SHOWDOWN: SUPER STAR WARS VS. STREET FIGHTER II

Capcom's *Street Fighter II* was an unqualified hit, but some of the crowd soon found themselves gravitating to LucasArts' *Super Star Wars*. While jump-and-attack in the early sequences, the authentic score, choice of player characters (Luke, Han Solo or Chewbacca) and some of the meanest nasties ever to crawl out of the Tatooine desert



Above: LucasArts' *Super Star Wars* for the Super NES.

would almost justify purchasing the cartridge alone. Nevertheless, players will also find themselves piloting X-Wing fighters through deep space and Death Star scenes that surpass even the *Star Wars* stand-up arcade game.

SEGA SHOWCASES CD

The most interesting rumor of the show was that Sega did not plan on recovering any of its equipment, feeling that, by Sunday, the mobs would steal everything. But the public proved more civil than they were given credit for. Sega's multiscreen presentation concentrated mostly on the Sega CD. And, though ahead of Nintendo in its CD development, Sega did not have much CD software to show, except some incredibly reproduced footage from *Batman Returns* and Ralph Bakshi's *Cool World*. However, VG&CE staffer Mike Davila discovered at the Tokyo Toy Show (see the feature on page 34) that Sega has plenty of CD software ready to be translated into American versions.

More intriguing than the numerous Batman products were the closely guarded screens showing demos of *Sonic 2*, complete with Sonic's new sidekick, Tails. [For those who couldn't make it to Chicago, VG&CE will be featuring an ex-

clusive print preview of *Sonic 2* in the October issue. Look for the special hologram cover.] Sega's own contribution to the brewing hardware price war was announced as the packaging of the Genesis with one controller and no software for \$99.99, as well as a Game Gear package with no software, also for \$99.99.

VG&CE'S SECRET LYNX SHOWING

Atari spent most of the show sharing a booth with Telégames, but an Atari representative stopped by to give VG&CE an exclusive private demonstration of the latest Lynx games. Probably the most heavily promoted Lynx game ever, *Batman Returns* will be available at no charge through a new Lynx offer. The Dark Knight will face the Tattooed Strong Man, the Snake Woman and the Fire Breather before even getting close to the movie's villains, the Penguin and Catwoman. Those who feel that the comic-book Caped Crusader is a bit too grim will be delighted by the inclusion of the Penguin's yellow rubber-ducky-mobile from the film.

The Lynx's strong point has always been its technology, and nowhere is that more obvious than in the system's first 4-meg game, *Dracula*. This adventure game, set in the Count's dark castle, features scaling graphics and is presented in an eerie, brown-red light that looks exactly like an old movie.



Atari's *Dracula* for the Lynx uses an appropriately eerie setting.



Above: CES show employees configure the CD display at the Sega booth. Left: A CES attendee tries out *Super Scope 6*.

ACCLAIM LICENSEES: ALIEN³ TO X-MEN

Capitalizing on its impressive slate of licensees, such as *Terminator 2*, *Alien³*, *The Simpsons* and Marvel Comics' *X-Men*, as well as its plans to produce games on as many consoles as possible, Acclaim had the largest and loudest display of any software manufacturer. The game publisher wisely scheduled George Foreman's promotional appearance on the trade-only days. Even so, the crowds surrounding him were too large for the VG&CE editors to bring him bags of hamburgers as a means of introduction. Big George, we'd still like to have lunch with you—dutch treat. One of our staff's favorite games was



A gamer at the controls of Bart's Nightmare, by Acclaim, for the SNES.

Patty look like Michelle Pfeiffer. Even more promising was the level where Bart is transformed into a Godzilla-like monster who rampages through a city.

DATA EAST'S SLEEPER SUCCESSES

Data East may not have Acclaim's big-name licensees, but, in spite of its second-string names, it is developing some top-quality games. Keeping our Saturday and Sunday appointments was a cakewalk compared to pulling our staff away from Data East's version of NovaLogic's Ultrabots. FASA's sleeper role-playing hit, *Shadowrun*, will be coming to the SNES. A mixture of cyberpunk and sorcery, *Shadowrun*'s hero begins by waking up in a morgue drawer. For the Genesis, Data East is developing a version of the arcade and NES hit, *Captain America and the Avengers*, which features a superhero school and a two-player mode where players pit their favorite archenemies against each other.



This summer's CES had an abundant crop of SNES games.

TURBOGRAFX DRAWS CROWDS—STAYS COMPETITIVE

TTI took 6,000 square feet of the floor to demonstrate the TG-16 and to show off its new TurboDuo, a CD and TG-16 combined in one unit, complete with a new system card and a package of software that alone justifies the \$299 price. The most interesting hardware renovation displayed was the TurboDuo hooked up to a Macintosh, which then accessed the CD. While this dual-functioning CD could mean enormous savings to the consumer, the TurboDuo's CD is slower than the normal CD-ROM, and buyers looking for access speed along with storage space will need to test the configuration.

TG-16 veterans, as well as newcomers, were invited to try a version of *Power League* created especially for the convention. This baseball game, currently available only in

from *Bart's Nightmare* for the SNES. In the most displayed sequence, Bart tries to find his missing homework in a world filled with animated mailboxes and kisses from a woman who makes Bart's aunts Selma and

Patty look like Michelle Pfeiffer. Even more promising was the level where Bart is transformed into a Godzilla-like monster who rampages through a city.

Japan, was projected onto a wall of televisions. Consumers and press attendees tried to hit ten home runs and win a special Bonk box filled with a Frisbee, Bonk sunglasses, stickers and collapsible binoculars. The most interesting TurboGrafx game was *Mesopotamia*, an arcade game in which the player controls a slinky with suction cups on its feet and a gun strapped around its middle.

PSYGNOSIS STRONG ON CDs

Determined to secure their share of the CD-ROM market, Psygnosis is offering a special CD-ROM version of *Armour-Geddon*, a 3-D tank simulation that allows for modem play. Impressive as it is, it pales in comparison to *Microcosm*, a Fantastic Voyage type exploration game with CD-ROM graphics detailed and accurate enough to be used in place of some textbooks. *Mega-smash Lemmings* will also be getting a CD-ROM version.

GO TO WAR WITH JALECO

Fans of *Lemmings* should also keep a close eye on Jaleco's release schedule. Players in *Men-At-Arms* (tentative name) will control lines of specialized medieval warriors trying to overtake rival castles. Individual soldiers will have specialized functions, such as magician, supply troops and engineers.



Jaleco's Men-At-Arms for the Super NES revolves around a medieval theme.

BARBIE HYPES HI-TECH



Hi Tech's Barbie Game Girl for the Game Boy.

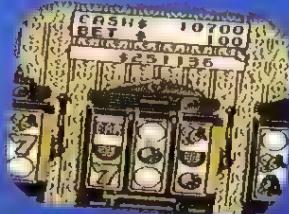
had her put on Rollerblades to help pitch *Rollerblade Racer* for the NES.

Hi-Tech won our award for the most efficient use of booth resources. Not only did it hire a golden-blonde actress to slip on a tiny, pink dress and play Barbie, thus promoting the NES and upcoming Game Boy software, it also

KONAMI STRONG ON SUPERHEROES

Konami held a special preview for VG&CE a few weeks before the convention, where we could try out the their latest games, including the exceptional, multiple-perspective shooter, *Axelay*. Steve Peterson was at the Konami complex to personally demonstrate the IBM PC version of his classic role-playing game, *Champions*. Plagued by delays almost from its inception, *Champions* is finally nearing completion, and the delays have been well worthwhile. In addition to

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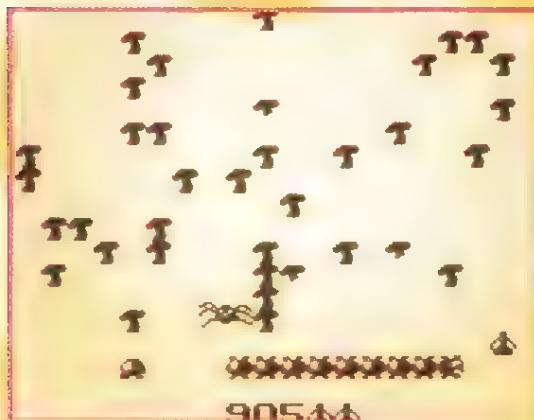


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the animated fight sequences, *Champions* features a genuine story-driven (versus map-driven) interface, which leads players from event to event depending on their ability to defeat the villains and maintain passable relations with the authorities. Comic-book writer Steve Engelhart (*Batman*, *Silver Surfer*, *Coyote*) contributed dialogue and plot ideas to *Champions*.

ACCOLADE'S ATARI CLASSICS

Accolade also proved complexity is not necessary for quality, as *Centipede* was easily the best Game Boy product



it demonstrated. British manufacturer Domark provided the most interesting of Accolade's distributed products with *'Nam 1965-1975*, a game where players are both military leader and U.S. President, who must maintain good relations with the South Vietnamese government and the American public. Noticeably absent from the Accolade display were all of its Sega Genesis products, since Sega won its request for a court injunction preventing the multi-format publisher from displaying or selling any Genesis wares. Sega claims Accolade violated Sega copyrights by disassembling and studying the form and function of the semiconductor chips in Genesis cartridges to learn how they work.

SIERRA GOES TO KRONDOR AND ON-LINE

Those preferring violence with their IBM PC adventure games should consider Dynamix's (a Sierra On-Line subsidiary) RPG *Betrayal at Krondor*. Based on Raymond E. Feist's *Riftwar* novels, it might just have the involved story line that most 3-D hack-and-slashers are missing.



Betrayal at Krondor is Dynamix's newest RPG.

For modern users, the newly launched Sierra Network provides an opportunity for gamers nationwide to play games like hearts and chess with each other, as well as professional classics like *Red Baron*. Subscribers can create a visual representation of what they want everyone to think they look like. This potential for multiple personas should make the network's chat lines a bit more interesting and unreserved than those with anonymous, but consistent, identities.

BRITISH STRATEGY MASTER IMPRESSIONS MEETS AMERICA

The CES is the best time for publishers to introduce themselves to the industry, and England's Impressions software took full advantage of the convention. A lauded producer of strategy games in Europe, Impressions turned down offers from some of the largest U.S. distributors before coming Stateside with the aid of Omnitrend Software. The title to watch for is *Conquest of Japan*. Expanding the system developed for *Charge of the Light Brigade*, *Conquest* features animated tactical combat within its strategic scenarios of the feuding samurai warlords.

DISNEY CREATES MAD SCIENTIST SIMULATION

Proving it is capable of far more than movie adaptations and educational software, Disney Software will publish *Unnatural Selection*. The ultimate game for would-be mad scientists, players use aircraft carriers as the breeding ground for creatures with varying physical attributes and ratios of the three prime drives: combat, feeding and mating. Upon creation of a supposedly tough monster, players set it loose on an island to battle the spawn of the game's villainous scientist. Unlike most simulation games, *Unnatural Selection* will attempt greater realism by giving players control of the creatures' breeding grounds, but not the animals themselves. That is left to their inbred "nature."



Mario and Yoshi on stage at the Nintendo booth.

Maxis' *El-Fish*, is an electronic aquarium that lets players breed their own species of fish. When crossbreeding two different kinds of fish, the computer will generate a brand-new species. This program is being created by AnimaTek (in Moscow) by a team of physicists and mathematicians led by Alexey Pajitnov (the creator of *Tetris*)

MAXIS DIVES INTO FISHTANKS AND EVOLUTIONARY STREAMS

Maxis' *El-Fish*, is an electronic aquarium that lets players breed their own species of fish. When crossbreeding two different kinds of fish, the computer will generate a brand-new species. This program is being created by AnimaTek (in Moscow) by a team of physicists and mathematicians led by Alexey Pajitnov (the creator of *Tetris*)

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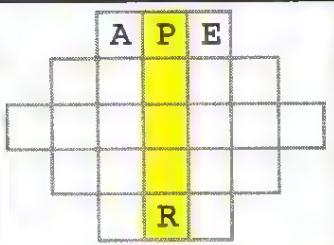
monitor, 130 watt receiver w/ Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound, infinity speakers, subwoofer, CD player, graphic EQ, dual cassette and Hi-Fi VCR. This rig will blow you away (literally)!!! You'll not only see but feel it too!

We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the middle. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at \$2.00 each and one tie-breaker at \$1.50 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 47% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 30% to Phase II, 25% to Phase III, and 20% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the prizes.

Mystery Word Grid



WORD LIST

QUEST	SUM	DREAM	HAT	WINGS
ONE	TURBO	GET	STORM	ART
INVADER	THUNDER	MUTANTS	CRAWLER	INDIANA
NINJA	FOR	CHASE	ASK	TOWER
FIT	MICRO	APE	RANGE	ACE

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CLIP AND MAIL

and Vladimir Pokhilko. El-Fish's fish and plants appear very three-dimensional, almost as if one were looking into an aquarium. The fish move around like real fish, occasionally eating one another, at other times floating belly up. They even react to the electronic particles of food just like real fish.

ORIGIN MODELS MERCENARY LIFE

At Origin Software, Chris Roberts (*Wing Commander*, which is being developed by Software Toolworks for the SNES) brings us *Strike Commander*, an action-adventure where the player leads a band of mercenaries called Stern's Wildcats. Using camera shots that people normally see in movies, a player feels more involved with the story than in most combat simulators. In fact, the primary setting is Turkey, but it might as well have been Bogart's Casablanca. This game is also supposed to be a leap forward in technology, but Origin was only showing the plane. The advances are in ground detail, since Origin is apparently generating terrain using fractal algorithms to produce a more realistic landscape.

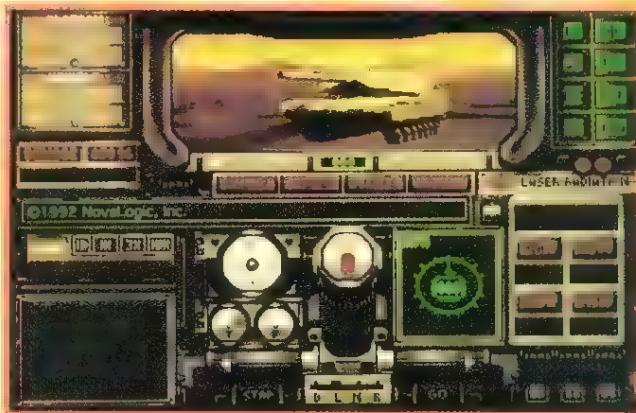
NOVALOGIC DIGITIZES SATELLITE SCENERY

Flight simulator fans should probably start reserving their copies of NovaLogic's *Maximum Overkill*. This heli-

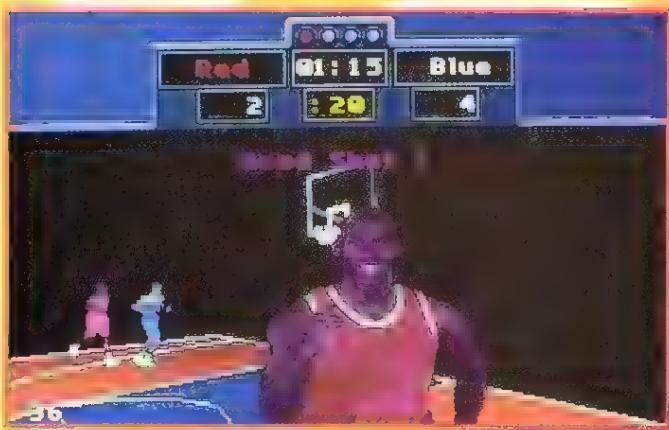


NovaLogic's two impressive games for the IBM PC, *Maximum Overkill* (above) and *Battlefield 2000* (right).

copter combat game uses terrain data from the Lansat satellite project, which is then converted into the gorgeous landscape. This same 3-D matrix graphic engine will also be used in NovaLogic's first RPG. Anyone preferring land-based combat will probably want to try its tank simulator, *Battlefield 2000*.



and Vladimir Pokhilko. El-Fish's fish and plants appear very three-dimensional, almost as if one were looking into an aquarium. The fish move around like real fish, occasionally eating one another, at other times floating belly up. They even react to the electronic particles of food just like real fish.



Originally shown at the Winter CES, Michael Jordan In Flight for the IBM PC will finally be available.

ELECTRONIC ARTS GOES ATHLETIC

From dressing its staffers in EASN shirts to inviting famous sports announcers to its parties, Electronic Arts is doing everything possible to promote its sports games, including *Michael Jordan In Flight* for the IBM PC. This basketball game is a halfcourt matchup that can either be played one-on-one, three-on-three or as a three-point shootout. The player controls Jordan, and the computer opposition plays intelligently: it sets up picks, moves to get open and plays man-to-man. Instead of only one camera position that overlooks an entire court, the view follows Jordan as he moves about the court. This lets the player see most of the action and, at the same time, get a good feel for how close a player is or whether someone is open or not.

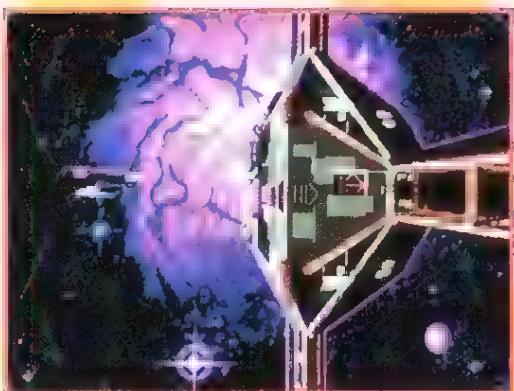
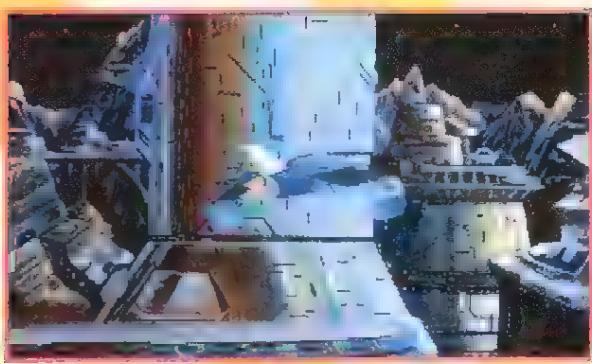
SSI REVISES ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS LINE

The "gold box" series has come to an end; SSI will continue to produce more games based on AD&D, starting with *Dark Sun: Shattered Lands*. The characters in this latest game are larger than those in the gold box products, and the animation is smoother.

VIRGIN SHOWCASES CD STUNNER: *7TH GUEST*

Virgin showed a semicomplete version of *The 7th Guest*, which is an adventure game set in the haunted house of Henry Stauf. Players do not seem to have much interaction with the characters in the game, as they observe the other characters, who are ghosts reliving the night in the house that killed them. The game is packed with outstanding graphics and there are 22 rooms in the haunted house; however, the game already takes up two compact discs and might require a third.

Screenwriter Matthew Costello, who has done some superb work writing for the H.P. Lovecraft role-playing game, *Call of Cthulhu*, contributed *The 7th Guest's* story line and dialogue.



MICROPROSE & PARAGON HIGHLIGHT HUMOR AND HALL OF FAME GAME DESIGNERS

MicroProse moves into adventure games with *Rex Nebular* and *the Cosmic Gender Bender*. One of the funniest games previewed at the Summer CES, it features an interstellar womanizer trapped on a planet populated only by bizarre women. After all, any game that combines dead fish and hamburgers in the same animated puzzle has got to be good, if not interesting.

Paragon is doing its best to keep adventure gaming hall of famer Marc Miller as busy as possible. Marc is designing the scenarios for *MegaTraveller 3: The Unknown Worlds*, which is based on the nonelectronic role-playing game he originally designed. Marc is also developing *Challenge of the Five Realms*, an icon-driven fantasy role-playing game with a zoom-in/zoom-out feature that allows three different perspectives. And anyone who loved *Alien* and hates his local newscaster should check out *Mantis: XF5700 Experimental Space Fighter*, a space combat simulator with three megabytes of synthesized speech. CD-ROM versions of *Mantis* and *Challenge of the Five Realms* will be available soon after the disk-based versions.

MicroProse has announced that it will release some previously available games in CD-ROM format.

JANUARY 1993—WE'LL BE THERE

Clearly, even without the admittance of the general public, four days was barely enough time for the VG&CE editors to see everything they wanted, getting just a glimpse of games like *Faceball 2000* for the SNES (Bullet-Proof), *Might and Magic IIIA: The Clouds of Xeen* (New World Computing) and other games we'd be playing if we didn't have to get this magazine out on time. Life is hard. Besides, it's only six months until the Winter CES in Las Vegas.

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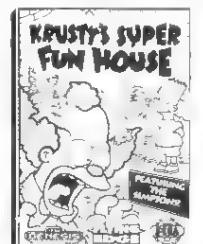
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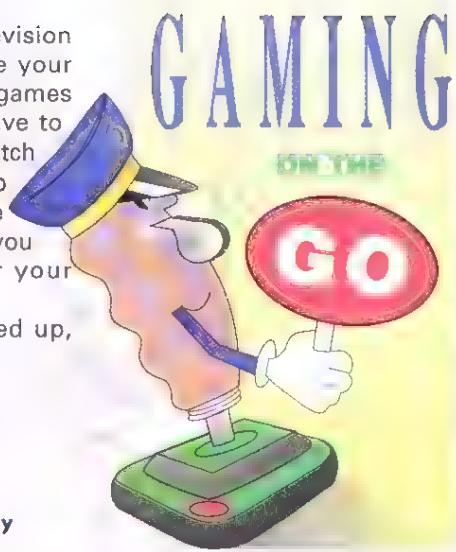
Okay, you've tied up the television set long enough—let's give your family a break from video games for a little while. But you don't have to stop playing in order to let them catch up with the evening news. Just grab your Game Gear, Lynx or Game Boy, then sit back and let me tell you all about the newest games for your favorite portable system.

Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Roger Clemens MVP Baseball

LJN

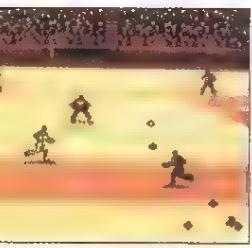
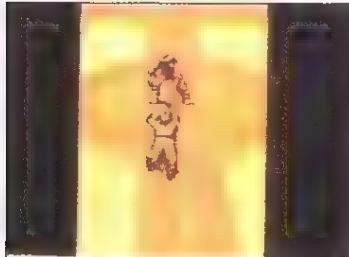
For the Nintendo Game Boy
(\$27.95)



BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

BOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Despite the fact that the original NES version of *Roger Clemens MVP Baseball* was never formally reviewed in the pages of this magazine, the game still made enough of an impression on our editors to merit an Honorable Mention in the sports category of VG&CE's "Best Games of 1991" awards.



Now there's good news for Game Boy owners, because the green-screen version of *MVP Baseball* is unquestionably the finest representation of the sport to appear on this system to date.

Not only is it fun to play and filled with options, but the graphics are infinitely superior to the round-headed cheesiness of the three existing Game Boy baseball titles—namely, *Baseball*, *Bases Loaded* and *Extra Bases*.

Though the lack of an official license from either Major League Baseball or its Players' Association may hurt the game's credibility in some circles, the endorsement of the "Rocket" is quite enough in my book. Of course, when you dive into the action and witness the changing

"camera angles" and interactive close-ups, you probably won't care if the names of the batters can't be found on any real-life roster.

Boasting a password-backed "full season" option, as well as a two-player GameLink mode, *Roger Clemens MVP Baseball* tries to cover all the bases, and its responsive controls and fluid character animation really set standards for Game Boy sports titles. It's not quite perfect—a horribly irritating, unrealistic soundtrack is the game's most noticeable flaw—but overall it's a fine game, one of the best sports titles the Game Boy has to offer.

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R.C. Grand Prix

ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT

For the Sega Game Gear (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Much like Nintendo's NES and Game Boy triumph *R.C. Pro-Am*, Absolute's first Game Gear release makes remote-control car racing an affordable hobby for anyone who owns Sega's color portable. Honestly, have you ever seen how much a good R.C. dragster costs? On my budget, I'll take *R.C. Grand Prix* over the real thing any day.



Absolute's *R.C. Grand Prix* for the Game Gear is a remote-control race car simulation.



An exciting and colorful contest, *R.C. Grand Prix* gets your adrenaline flowing with some of the most intense high-speed action ever seen on the Game Gear's 3½-inch screen. Smooth background scrolling and a hypersensitive control scheme ensure that the pace is always frantic—heck, even if you can outrace the three computer-controlled cars on the track, you're also forced to work within a super-strict time limit.

Fortunately, the game's tension is nicely tempered by a strong sense that these are, in fact, *R.C.* cars and not full-sized automobiles. Even as the first race begins, you can see crowds of people towering in the background, cheering the racers onward.

Winning a race will earn you a cash prize (again, we're talking small-scale here: about \$100 or so), and, as in any good racing title, you'll be able to upgrade your car's motor, tires, gears or suspension between races. Though it's essentially a one-player game, up to four players can take turns racing against the computer.

It's always nice to see original Game Gear software—that is, games that aren't simply 8-bit versions of proven Genesis titles. And while the slight blurring of the text characters would seem to indicate that *R.C. Grand Prix* may not necessarily have been intended for the small screen, it works very well on this platform, and it just might find a very comfortable niche in the Game Gear library.

Absolute Entertainment Inc.
251 Rock Road
Glen Rock, NJ 07452
(201) 652-1227

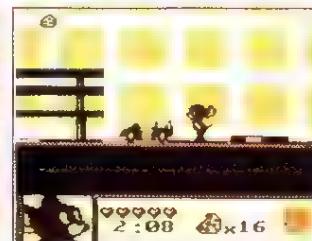
Tom & Jerry

HI TECH EXPRESSIONS
For the Nintendo Game Boy
(\$29.95)

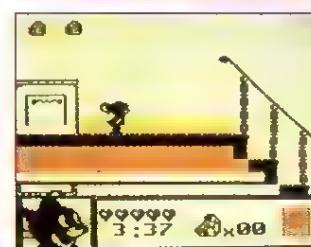
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The word "Nintendo" dropping down from the top of the screen with a *ding!* is a pretty poor substitute for the roar of the MGM lion, but the lack of that world-famous introduction doesn't hurt the comical adventures of this familiar cat-and-mouse team on the small screen.

The object of this *Super Mario*-style romp is to control Jerry the mouse as he scurries through the house of Tom the cat's owner in search of his missing cousin, Tuffy. Dur-



Hi Tech's Tom & Jerry for the Game Boy is more faithful to the original theatrical cartoons than the NES version.



ing the course of his adventure, Jerry gets to do everything from driving a toy car to sliding down banisters to riding in a dumbwaiter. He also has to avoid mouse-eating flowers, baby sharks, killer toy soldiers and the malicious clawing of Tom

the cat, who seems to pop out of the wood-work when you least expect it.

To its credit, the Game Boy version of *Tom & Jerry* is a bit more faithful to the original theatrical cartoons than Hi Tech's *T&J* game for the NES was. (The games were created for Hi Tech by two different developers: the NES version by Software Creations, the Game Boy by Beam Software.) The differences between the two become apparent as soon as the title screen of each game appears: The Game Boy pumps out a much more traditional rendition of Tom and Jerry's theme song, and it makes better use of full-screen pictures of the characters. It also boasts a cleaner design and a more reasonable difficulty curve.

Aside from the burden of an unoriginal theme, the game does suffer from background repetition, which leads to some confusion because parts of certain stages seem to reappear several times. There are also a few areas where you'd expect Jerry to be able to climb (like the vines in Level 5) and he just can't do it. But these quirks are not enough to detract from the fun of playing *Tom & Jerry* on the go.

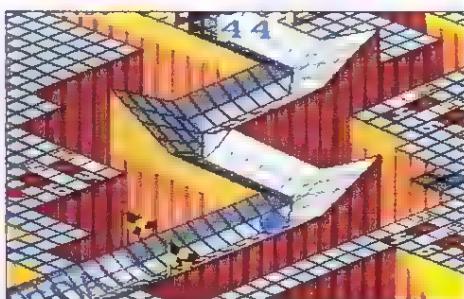
Hi Tech Expressions
584 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
(212) 941-1224

Marble Madness

TENGEN
For the Sega Game Gear (\$34.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

A durable arcade classic that has appeared on more game systems than you can shake a stick at, *Marble Madness*



Tengen's *Marble Madness* for the Game Gear is an easy-to-learn-but-difficult-to-master contest.

is one of those easy-to-learn-but-difficult-to-master contests that seem to thwart the ambitious gamer with a difficulty curve that's always just barely out of reach. The Game Gear version is as good as most others—a few corners have been cut here and there, but the playability is intact, as are the more endearing aspects of the original coin-op.

As the name implies, the object of the game is to steer a marble through a series of mazes that form a bizarre landscape of ramps, obstacles and sneaky enemy creatures. Though there's plenty of challenge involved in steering clear of all of these hazards, your biggest enemy is the timer that dominates the top of the screen. I've seen and played many different versions of this game over the years, and it seems as though none of them really give you enough time to navigate the terrain at a comfortable pace. That's really the key to the game's appeal: It treads the fine line between challenge and frustration with the skill of a circus tightrope walker.

The most common complaint I've heard about any version of *Marble Madness* is a gripe that holds true for dozens of titles that range from *Q*Bert* to *The Immortal*. Some people just don't like a video game in which the main body of the game requires you to point your controller diagonally. I didn't have much of a problem with this one—the game does offer a configuration screen that allows you to change the control scheme slightly—but I do have to admit that the circular direction button of the Game Gear can't compare to the original trackball controller in the arcade version.

All things considered, *Marble Madness* serves as an enjoyable visit to the video-game hall of fame. Its appearance on the portable scene is a welcome one.

Tengen Inc.

675 Sycamore Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 473-9400

Atari's *Steel Talons* for the Lynx is based on the coin-op original.



Steel Talons

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx (\$39.99)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I've always looked down on *Hard Drivin'* as one of the least enjoyable Lynx titles ever released. Arcade license notwithstanding, this first-person, stunt-driving game was sandbagged with the most sluggish controls I've felt in a long time. Upon its release, I really believed that the game was rendered unplayable by a super-slow frame rate. It just seemed like the screen couldn't keep up with the commands being issued by the control pad and buttons.

It took John Sanderson and NuFX Inc. to show me the error of my ways. Their Lynx conversion of Atari's *Steel Talons* coin-op uses the same type of polygon-fill scenery as *Hard Drivin'* did, but it corrects all of that game's problem areas beautifully. It's no small irony that NuFX was responsible for *Hard Drivin'* as well, but Sanderson seems to have learned a lot from his mistakes.

The screen updates in this helicopter battle simulator happen at almost exactly the same rate as in *Hard Drivin'*, about three frames per second, but there's a world of difference in the control response. *Steel Talons* just seems to know where you want to steer your chopper, and the controls are as easy to learn as they are responsive.

This is the kind of game you can really

lose yourself in. Each successive mission presents a different type of challenge, with a change in location, time of day and weather conditions every time. You will hunt down planes, strafe the



surface of woodlands, soar through mountains, blow up enemy fortifications *real* good and even maneuver your way through canyons that look an awful lot like the Death Star trench from *Star Wars*.

Though the complexity of this type of simulation tends to turn some gamers off, *Steel Talons* keeps things simple by present-

ing a lot of information in an extremely concise manner. The on-screen speed and altitude indicators are as unobtrusive as can be, yet they give you all the information you could possibly need in just a casual glance. This is a very classy game, one that took me completely by surprise.

Atari Entertainment
500 Watersedge Drive, Suite 310
Lombard, IL 60148
(708) 629-6500

Kung Food

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx (\$39.99)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

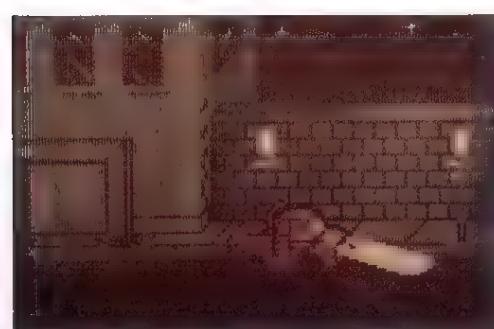
If you ever watched *Pee-wee's Playhouse* on Saturday morning TV, even if you only saw the show once, it's hard to forget the wild contents of Pee-wee's refrigerator. Nearly every week, the bow-tied man/child would throw open the ol' Norge and marvel at the latest stop-motion animated antics of carrots, eggs, hams, popsicles and strawberries, all of which had grown arms, legs and comically expressive faces.

I don't know how fashionable it is to admit to having watched *Pee-wee's Playhouse* these days; all I know is that it's the first thing I thought of when I saw *Kung Food* on the Lynx. This beat-'em-up has "classic" written all over it. Like *Battletoads* on the NES and Game Boy, it's a totally unpredictable free-for-all that combines a challenging punch-and-kick play mechanic with a great sense of humor that seems to catch you off guard at every turn.

A hilarious plot explains how a re-



Graphically, *Kung Food* for the Lynx is a pure delight.



searcher at a video game-design center created a mysterious substance that brought his groceries to life and changed him into a foot-tall Jolly Green Giant look-alike. The adventure starts in the freezer and refrigerator, where our hero is threatened by icicle beasts, walking carrots, killer tomatoes, mashed-potato creatures and stick-wielding sausage monsters; it continues onto the floor, through the kitchen and out into the front yard. The game is fairly challenging, but the abundance of power-up items helps a lot.

Graphically, the game is a pure delight. Most of the characters are half as tall as the screen display, and, like the back-



grounds, they're extremely detailed and colorful. With "normal" heroes and villains, this would basically come across as a *Double Dragon* clone—but the characters and settings are so off-the-wall that it doesn't seem right to compare the game to any other.

I had a great time with *Kung Food*, and I truly hope that this game gets the recognition it deserves, because it is an absolute riot.

Atari Entertainment
500 Watersedge Drive, Suite 310
Lombard, IL 60148
(708) 629-6500

Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with access to the DELPHI information service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to user name VGCHRIS, or stop by the "World of Video Games" special interest group and drop me a note in the public forum. 

GETTING INTO THE GAME

by Andy Eddy

Nickelodeon Studios brings its own form of virtual reality to television game shows

Most people consider that creating a "virtual reality" environment requires super-duper, high-tech computers hooked up to an elaborate visor display system and realistic 3-D graphics. Who would have thought that virtual reality would make an appearance on a kids' game show? But, in fact, that's what a pair of innovative producers at Nickelodeon have done in creating *Nick Arcade*, which was recently bumped into a slot during Nick's weekday prime time, the "O-Zone" (check your local listings for when it's showing in your area). *Nick Arcade* begins its second season on September 7.

Not Just Another Game Show

The components of *Nick Arcade* are much like any other game show you've seen: a host, two teams of two players each and a goal of beating the

other team in a variety of tasks so you can go to the finals. *Nick Arcade*, due to its youthful slant—it's pri-

The main set of *Nick Arcade* features video-game contests.



marily aimed at viewers between the ages of 9 and 14—has a natural attraction in having the focus of the game related to video games. The show begins with the Yellow and Red teams battling each other. The challenge comes in the form of custom "face-off" games (created by Curt Toumanian's Live Studios and Psygnosis), such as *Star Defenders*. *Star Defenders* is a head-to-head *Breakout* type of game. The team that scores the most in 30 seconds takes control of the board.

In order to gain points and prizes, the team controlling the board takes a video character named Mikey through various adventures. Mikey's domain is a grid of squares, each square containing "points, puzzles, pop quizzes and prizes," all of which lead the teams to a goal square. Landing on a Video Challenge square takes a team up against one of the current home video games, trying to beat a point level in 30 seconds. A pop quiz is a question that must be answered correctly for points and control of the board.

The fun—and main attraction—comes for the team that makes it through two rounds of moving Mikey through his paces with the most points. That team goes "into the game" to take on a series of virtual reality-like contests in the bonus round. Again, custom games have been designed, but with a difference: The player is actually *part* of the game, interacting with the computer animation in real time. "Virtual reality is usually visors and stuff, which is great for the person wearing it," Scott Fishman, executive in charge of production, said, "but it's not a spectator sport. *Nick Arcade* is fun to watch."

Really Getting Into It

The bonus round takes place on a different set from the main game, one that's painted completely blue. Some of the bonus-round sets feature pillars that can be traveled behind, while others have elevated platforms and ladders that can be climbed.

Wait a minute...all painted blue? Why? Well, there is a video process called Ultimatte (also called Chromakey) that removes a particular color from the image. You've probably seen this process used on the local news, primarily during the weathercasts. The weatherman doesn't actually appear in front of a weather map, but in front of a blue screen. Ultimatte is then used to replace the blue with whatever video display is desired, whether it's a map, five-day forecast or videotape of a local scene.

Nick Arcade takes Ultimatte a step further; in fact, it recently won an award from the National Association of Broadcasters for innovative use of the equipment. It uses Ultimatte to separate the player from the background, but then runs that image through an Amiga-based digitizer to turn the player into a character that can be tracked by the computer, almost like a sprite. The empty background is replaced with animation from another Amiga application—the game software that the team competes in—only

now the player's status can be tracked with collision detection, much like any other object in the game. "Touching" a good object, like a coin or hour glass, may take the team closer to its goal or freeze the action for a period of time. On the other hand, getting hit by or running into a bad object or character will drop the player's power level. Depleting five notches on the power meter requires the



Top: Host Phil Moore keeps the energy level high. **Middle:** Moore joins one of the teams on the *Nick Arcade* set. **Bottom:** A player leaps high on the blue set in one of *Nick Arcade*'s interactive games.

player to start again and try to hit the milestone from the beginning.

The producers of *Nick Arcade* have 14 such games in reserve, of which three are used in a single bonus round. Getting past each segment rewards the team with a prize, and successfully beating all three bonus games wins a major prize, like a trip.

At the Root of the Fun

This isn't the first time this technology has made its way to television. *Nick Arcade*'s producers, Karim Miteff and James Bethea, formerly worked on a Nickelodeon show called *Total Panic*. One of the features of *Total Panic* was a segment called *Eat a Bug*, developed and programmed by Dean Friedman. A precursor to the more involved bonus rounds of *Nick Arcade*, *Eat a Bug* brought some members of the audience onstage in an effort to catch certain video insects without getting hit by bees, spiders and beetles. Similar to *Nick Arcade*, if you got hit by too many bad bugs, you were out.

Both *Eat a Bug* and *Nick Arcade*'s bonus segments are a result of the foundation created by a virtual-reality environment called *Mandala Virtual Reality System*, developed by The Vivid Group in Toronto, Canada. Originally designed to be a medium for performance art, Vivid



Behind the Scenes at

Group built some interesting uses for *Mandala*, such as allowing the person in front of the camera to play a video drum set with

his hands or literally "grab" a hue from a palette and paint around the screen in a form of video finger painting. "When we conceived it, part of it was for creating computer worlds that you could step into," said Vincent John Vincent, one of *Mandala*'s creators, "and some of that was the challenge of games."

All that has changed now that Miteff and Bethea have taken *Mandala* and gone wild with it, taking the process further. In fact, the pair's reliance on computers is amazing: There are five Amiga 3000s to control Mikey's grid game; two Commodore CDTVs that handle the scoring system; one Mac IIcx that's used as a slave unit for all the MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) sounds that are tied to certain events; and two more beefed-up Amigas that are used during the interactive games. "There's a lot of technology going on," Bethea relayed. Having grown up with exposure to PCs and video games—both producers are 27 years old—is no doubt the foundation for the duo's success at adapting all this technology to the show.

The multitude of PCs work together to smooth the merging of sound effects, animation and other visuals, but also serve to minimize the possibility of human error. By the time Miteff and Bethea are finished, the process of doing a game show may very well be primarily controlled by computer operators rather than traditional studio hands. For example, in the course of a game, a computer operator needs only hit the arrow key to move Mikey in the direction a team wants him to move. In

Nick Arcade's first season, many of the related graphics were kept on videotape and also in what's called a "still store," an extensive library of still frames. It would take awhile to bring up the proper graphic, and, given the hectic pace that a particular episode of *Nick Arcade* is created under, the slightest delay or error could spell disaster to the tight shooting schedule (at its peak, five complete shows are taped in one day).

Miteff and Bethea now employ a laser disc tied to one of the Amigas to hold these graphic clips. Now, when the computer operator hits the arrow key pertaining to Mikey's movement, the laser-disc system instantly kicks out the correct graphic and associated MIDI sound effects. Miteff and Bethea eventually hope to pare down the process even more by automating a portion of the lighting chores through MIDI control—sort of a robotic production, but very efficient.

Of course, the crowning achievement in *Nick Arcade* is the interactive aspect. "We're using [*Mandala*] in an unconventional way," Miteff noted, "but I won't be happy until we can have someone running in a scrolling game. The stuff we have on the drawing board will blow people away."

Certainly, one of the major changes in the video-game world came about when designers moved from single-screen games (like *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids*) to scrolling adventures (like *Jungle Hunt* and, particularly, *Super Mario Bros.*).

And to think that *Nick Arcade* is mostly accomplishing it with inexpensive home computers that you can get at your local computer store. "These are all off-the-shelf products," Miteff said. It makes you wonder where *Nick Arcade* will be next year. ☺

Adventures in a



One of *Nick Arcade*'s producers, James Bethea, welcomes VG&CE Executive Editor Andy Eddy.

Watching a dozen teenagers competing in *Nick Arcade*—three shows were taped the day I visited, out of the 42 shows that were to be created for the second season—was pretty exciting stuff. In fact, Universal Studios Florida has made an art out of the behind-the-scenes glimpses of TV shows and movies being created: Visitors can tour tapings behind glass at the rear of active sound stages and control booths. However, excitement turned to trepidation at the sound of five simple words:

"Hey, Andy...wanna try it?"

Before I could answer, I was whisked off to the wardrobe room to suit up in *Nick Arcade* overalls, knee and elbow pads and a helmet for my turn to battle Merlock, the evil wizard.

Just Do It

I had some experience with the original *Mandala* environments at a festival in San Francisco in 1991. While I originally sent my kids in to mess with a set of electronic drums overlaid on a video of a band play-

Video-Game Wonderland

ing, it wasn't long before I was "helping" them hit the cymbals and toms at the right time. The response time for your "video self" to hit a computer-graphic drum and the resultant sound to be heard appeared to be very quick, and the kids took right to it. After all, what's to learn? The same went for video finger painting and a strange version of *Breakout/Arkanoid* that had the player hitting a ball around on the screen. All this is fun even for the observers, but it's wild when you take your eyes away from the monitor to see the person flailing about, responding to what they see on the screen. That's when the impact of what *Mandala's* creators have done sets in. There are no control pads to learn or elaborate directions. You just react to what you see on the screen—as if it really existed in your world.

Still, I fully anticipated making a fool of myself on *Nick Arcade's* blue set. Thankfully, someone told me that the ones who have the biggest blast are the producers when they try out a new game. Suddenly, it wasn't so intimidating.

The game's goal seemed simple enough. All I had to do was elude the nasty wizard, his lightning bolts, other streams of electricity coming out of the floor and various flying beasties crossing back and forth. If I managed to grab three blue orbs before my power and time ran out, I'd be home free. Sure...

Excuses first: The particular game I played is designed for two players. Given that there are three stairways/ladders to maneuver around, it's kind of hard to keep your eye on the monitor at the edge of the set to know if you're about to get tagged by a bad guy. After all, these things are only flying around you in video land, and

can't be seen unless you check your status on the TV screen—or have someone check it out for you. And the blasting sound effects and music from the game made it hard to hear the directions from the *Nick Arcade* crew.

Like any video game, though, it's important to know the rules and how the game plays, in addition to spotting any patterns that might make it easier to beat. I only had 15 minutes to get the hang of it, so I made some foolish mistakes right off. The main trouble I had—besides attempting this at all—was my habit of running into the wizard when he appeared at the middle of the top runway. Over time, I'm sure I would have become a real master at this.

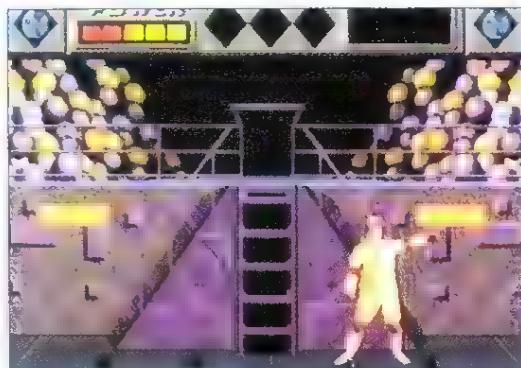
But the task at hand was to get those three blue globes. The first one was the easiest; when you hit the **START** button, a sphere comes from the

While you play, a monitor shows you where you are in game-land.

cleaning out the bad guys go smoother (it's since been made more difficult).

All in all, it was a weird experience—on par with *Battletech Center*, but much more intuitive. Once you're told what to do, you just jump right in and do it, though your attention is on a monitor, so it's easy to misjudge a ladder step or platform. There is something to the visor method to allow you the freedom of not having to find the placement of the monitor to see where you are in the game.

There's no doubt that *Bethea* and *Mitoff* are onto something here. It's not hard to see how television can benefit from this cutting-edge technology. "Real Television." Kinda has a ring to it, huh? 



Eddy was overwhelmed by all the hazards around him—this contest was designed for two players—until *Bethea* saved him.

left and moves to the center. The second and third globes were a bit harder, appearing at the left and right of the top platform—where most of the evil activity takes place. It finally took James *Bethea* jumping in and handling the bottom section to make



It has been 11 years since Sir-Tech released Robert Woodhead and Andrew Greenburg's *Wizardry I: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord*, which permanently changed the computer-gaming industry. This fall, Sir-Tech will release David Bradley's *Wizardry—Crusaders of the Dark Savant*, achieving not only Sir-Tech's return to greatness, but revitalizing what had seemed to be the creatively exhausted field of computer fantasy role-playing. VG&CE, with the help of Sir-Tech, has obtained an exclusive copy.

Bradley began work on *Crusaders* immediately after finishing *Wizardry—Bane of the Cosmic Forge*. Originally planning on a September 1991 release, he realized that all of *Crusaders*' improvements would take far longer than anticipated and was keenly aware of who would take the responsibility for any disappointments. "I do not want to be remembered as the author who turned out hack."

Cosmetically, *Wizardry—Bane of the Cosmic Forge* was exponentially superior to the previous *Wizardry* scenarios, and *Crusaders*' new improvements are obvious from the initial boot. Harpsichordlike (preview copy tested on Covox Sound Master II) music greets players as they discover that the game, which began with dungeon outlines, finally has a changing skyline, trees and 256-color graphics. *Bane's* nearly unworkable mouse interface has been completely revamped, and even the keyboard is easy to use. And, finally, after six volumes of frustrating mazes, *Wizardry* has an auto-mapper. But like everything else in *Crusaders*, it's kept as realistic as possible without hurting playability. Characters need a map kit to even make a record, and their maps are prone to whatever mistakes and omissions the skill level calls for.

The choppy animation and rough drawings of *Bane* are also gone, and Chris Appel's art team has produced some of the best art to appear in any current RPG. But what truly makes *Crusaders*' encounters special is that they are entirely new creatures—not just variations on orcs, lizardmen and skeletons. One of the new player's first encounters will be with a species of phoot. While they look like starfish, Bradley didn't conceive of phoots as walking starfish. Instead, he was experimenting with new ways an animal could move besides walking, flying, crawling or slithering. While animation is rarely important in an RPG, watching the phoots conveys the feeling of being on an

SEVEN'S THE CHARM: Sir-Tech and Wizardry Return to Greatness

A VG&CE EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW OF WIZARDRY—
CRUSADERS OF THE DARK SAVANT

alien world—especially when they run away. Similarly, the nasty, greedy, humanoid Trang were inspired by tarantulas, which are much more aggressive hunters than most spiders. The noble, imperialist umpani are stolid, rhinoceroslike creatures, and the thieving rakkis look exactly like one would expect. Besides killing creatures, characters need to extract any information they can, using gifts, cajoling and threats. Players choose a party spokesman, and progress is noted with every action, until the desired item is delivered or they manage to infuriate the stranger. Given the tendency for interracial conflict and alien sensitivities, anyone not able to at least look impressive in battle might do best to shy away from fellow adventurers until he advances in levels. Gathering information is critical to success in *Crusaders*, but novices who

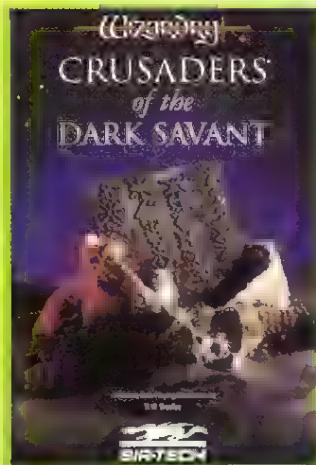
anger the wrong dane will watch the light-blue creatures fry the party before they can eek out an apology.

Characters are not limited to the standard humans, dwarves and elves either. Household pet fans will appreciate the canine rawulfs and catlike felpurs, which are, respectively, devoted (high piety) and stealthy. The acid-spitting draconis have helped more than one party survive the early battles, and the mooks are perfect for anyone who's ever wanted to be a magical wookie.

Players may be steeped in magic, but higher technology is available. The Dark Savant's followers have laser lances, and later in the game the party gains access to firearms. Anyone with hopes of taking an Uzi to the Trang will soon realize the characters have to learn how to operate a musket, find ammunition and then discover whether it really beats a double-bladed battle-ax. This high-tech feeling will eventually emerge as a science-fiction flavored story, but with the fantasy elements left intact. Bradley views most sci-fi as "cold and dry, with no romantic, mythical feel."

After programming three endings into his previous scenario, Bradley wanted players to have as much control as possible in *Crusaders*, and this required finally getting players out of the dungeon. In fact, he hadn't planned on having so much of the game take place outdoors. Once programming began, he realized that an extensive wilderness was necessary to achieve the free-form game he wanted. Players have so much freedom in *Crusaders* that even those who survive might still fail at accomplishing the game's major goals—on the other hand, that's up to

BY DAVID MOSKOWITZ



Wizardry players finally get to discover that the outdoors are no less deadly after six games.

them. Opponents are tough, and in no situation will players ever face an unfair advantage programmed into the game. "It's a big universe out there," the designer explains. "The game is far more dependent on player skills and resourcefulness as commander in chief of characters than any element or puzzle. You are in far more control than the game is." Supporting this philosophy is a multitude of skills, six colleges of spells and martial options that force players to choose between accuracy and damage potential.

One of the nicest touches in *Crusaders* is the system for opening locks and chests. Random numbers flash on the screen, and players try to time striking the appropriate key whenever the numbers are high enough. Locks have difficulty levels, as well as numerous tumblers, conveying the feeling that the player is actually picking the lock, even though the process takes minimal playtime.

Just as it's poised to do now, Sir-Tech changed the industry, and understanding the importance of this current release requires an examination of *Wizardry*'s trek back to glory.

Wizardry: Dungeons of Despair, an early version of *Wizardry I: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord*, originally debuted at Boston Applefest in 1981. At the time, most companies had some form of fantasy playing, but it was *Wizardry* that finally produced a simulation of the role-playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Tunnels & Trolls* and *Runequest*. Players devoted enormous amounts of time to multicharacter, mapping-intensive dungeon exploration, with a multitude of traps, treasures and creatures just begging to be killed. Each spell even had a goofy name with a linguistic consistency built right in (dios healed small wounds, while badios caused them). Best of all, it had elevators to help speed adventurers to the lower levels, saving them the effort of having to slaughter hundreds of orcs, kobolds, green slimes and lesser undead.

Beyond sales figures alone, *Wizardry* was an event for the fledgling home-computer community. Even nongame players found the Sir-Tech software intriguing. It was programmed in Pascal, when just about all of its contemporaries were in Apple II machine code or Applesoft BASIC. While most games were crammed into one file, *Wizardry*'s nearly constant disk access allowed for color drawings of all creatures and an enormous dungeon. Heralding what would become a necessary obsession for the gaming industry, it had

nearly unbreakable copy protection. Underground bulletin boards and user groups were flooded with *Locksmith* codes for the game that would be the true test of software pirates. Over the next several scenarios, Sir-Tech used disk-based protection and barely readable red booklets before finally switching over to document-based protection in *Crusaders*. Just in case people thought Sir-Tech was overly paranoid about copy protection, copies of *Dungeons of Despair* found their way to Apple computers. Apple then offered Sir-Tech the chance to publish the final game. Its diligence continued to pay off, as shown when broken copies of *Ultima III* hit user groups before the game was on store shelves.

ASCII's conversion of *Proving Grounds* to the NES was identical, if not better. Spells were selected from menus rather than typed in, and the cartridge-based medium—rather than disk-based—made game play lightning quick.

Wizardry's second scenario, *Knight of Diamonds*, by definition could not be the groundbreaking *Proving Grounds* was, but it had its share of innovations. Not only were players allowed to transfer characters from *Proving Grounds*, they could not play *Knight of Diamonds* without characters from the first game. A dubious marketing move in today's RPG-flooded market, it was a brilliant move at the time, keeping both games on store shelves far longer than any other entertainment software. The NES version begins with newly created characters, but, in an effort to preserve the high-level atmosphere, ASCII is marketing *Knight of Diamonds* as "the



Crusaders' creatures are more complex than the standard adventure fodder.



world's most challenging FRP simulation for the NES."

Legacy of Llylgamyn gave the public "Window Wizardry" screen presentation. It was critically praised, but, by preceding the Apple Lisa (the precursor of the Macintosh and Windows), nobody was able to appreciate what a development it was. Currently available for the NES in Japan, *Legacy* is being developed for American markets.

Wizardry's fourth scenario, the expert-level *Return of Werdna*, was accompanied by serious personal conflicts at Sir-Tech that led to the departure of the old programmers and lawsuits that still have not been settled.

Enter David Bradley, a longtime role-player and board gamer whose first computer game, *Parthion Kings*, had just been published by Avalon Hill. Bradley approached Sir-Tech with his own fantasy role-playing system. They examined it for a long time before asking him to convert it to *Wizardry*. This game would become *Heart of the Malestrom*. Though it was similar in appearance to the other scenarios, Bradley reprogrammed about two-thirds of the *Wizardry* system. Still graphically primitive for the market, Bradley's innovations were obvious: Nonplayer characters could be spoken to and bargained with, instead of simply killed. In fact, Bradley provided players with written

Chris Appel's alien characters demonstrate how fantasy role playing need not be set in strictly medieval realms.

Detailed animation and 256-color graphics make *Crusaders* the first game to be visually competitive since *Wizardry III*.

histories, which had the humor and life that was desperately needed in the games.

Heart of the Malestrom's moderate success, coupled with the competition's superior technology, convinced Sir-Tech to let Bradley completely reinvent the game. Everything, from the ever-present character meeting place, Gilgamesh's Tavern, to the goofy spell names, was eliminated, ensuring no link to previous scenarios other than the name on the box and the publisher. Animated graphics were added along with the new spell system, which divided incantations into six realms: earth, fire, air, water, divine and mind. And, though Bradley wanted to start adding some of the science-fiction elements now appearing in *Crusaders*, he knew that a new system and an entirely new realm might alienate some players, and, thus, he used a vampire scenario he had wanted to write into the game for years. The result, *Bane of the Cosmic Forge*, was an enormous success, but still had flaws. The animation was choppy and limited in color. The mouse interface was added almost as an afterthought and made typing in commands seem preferable. With *Crusaders*, all the previous flaws are eliminated. The redefined *Wizardry* has proven itself a worthy successor to the old system, artistically and, given *Bane*'s success and retailer interest in *Crusaders*, financially, too.

As immense as its world is, *Crusaders* is simply the prologue to an even more ambitious story that will begin in the next volume of *Wizardry*. Not that anyone expects *Crusaders* to disappear quickly—Sir-Tech is working on potential translations into Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. *Crusaders* players having difficulty will be able to call Sir-Tech at a non-900 number or wait for the clue book. And as for general hints, the best come from Sir-Tech Vice-President Robert Sirotech: "Put two dragons in the party and have patience."



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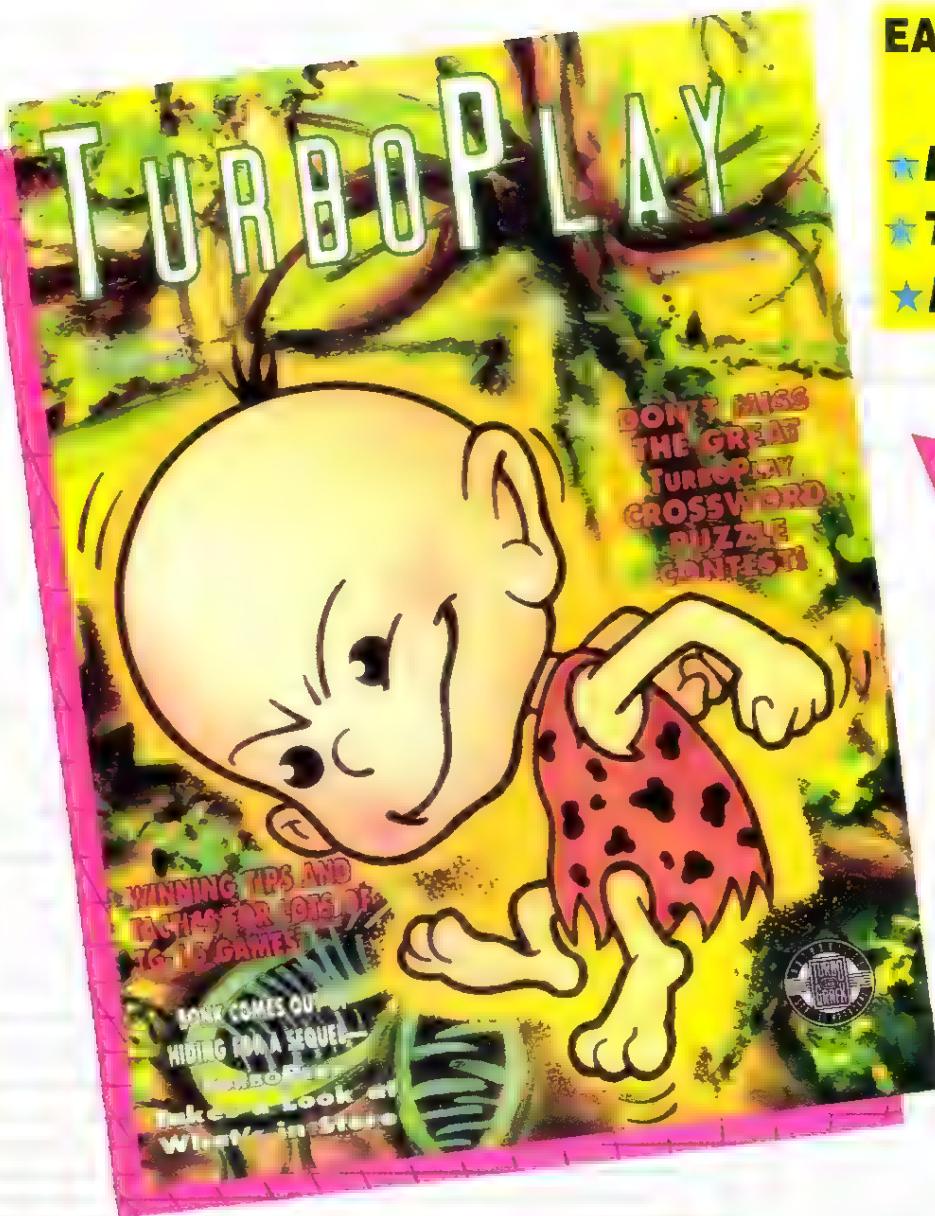
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Imagine for a moment that you come home from a long day at the office or school and you plop down on your favorite couch for a little TV and relaxation. But instead of spending another evening with the Cosbys, you're presented with a menu offering access to a slew of information and entertainment. It was a particularly tough day, so you crave a little entertainment. You select your favorite game, *Fleet Commander*, and suddenly you're in a completely different world.

As the Fleet Commander you take the helm of an entire battle group. Poring through a morass of information within different video displays and verbal reports, you make strategic decisions that will determine the fate of thousands of people and ultimately the war. Suddenly, you hear the roar of jet engines and the whoosh of the catapult. As quickly as you can, you switch your view just in time to see the first of four F-14 Tomcats you ordered to launch go screaming into the sky.

But there's more to this electronic world than you bargained for. Just two years earlier, you joined the electronic Navy as an A-6 copilot. In that time, you earned the respect of your peers with each successful mission. Now, two years later, you're a veteran of two "battles." The promotions and commendations you've received have now given you the privilege of commanding the battle group you see before you.

You're not alone. Looking down on the flight deck, you see the second F-14 take off. The Tomcat is piloted by Eric, a dentist in North Carolina, who joined your electronic universe only three months ago. Rookie.

Eric started out manning one of the radar terminals in the Navy's version of the AWACs, the E3-C Hawkeye. After a few months of directing aircraft in battle, Eric put in a request to be transferred to Miramar, the Navy's pilot-training facility. Two weeks of intensive training

the next few years, expect to see the appearance of the technology needed to support such an experience. Though the concept is hardly new—interactive "worlds" have been accessible for years through networks—few sages within the industry thought the technology would come so far so fast. In the next three to five years, most Americans (i.e., anyone who has a television) will have bidirectional digital communication in their homes. It could come from your phone company, your cable company or a small satellite dish in your window, but it is coming.

The "electronic battlefield" described previously is just one of the many possibilities in this emerging technology. One can imagine troop, tank, helicopter or submarine simulators, all linked in real time, working toward a common goal. In a truly interactive experience, you participate with hundreds, maybe even thousands of other people in this computer-generated world. Not just battlefields, but entire economic and political worlds can be modeled. We're not talking computers with modems here, but your everyday, common television set. Hey, it beats the heck out of the home shopping network.

Interactive games and simulations found in any one of various existing products form the models upon which this technology is based. For instance, GEnie's *Air Warrior* lets you participate in multiplayer, fast-action air combat. Then there's The Sierra Network, a dial-up service offered by Sierra On-Line, allowing members to play a number of multiplayer games, including *Red Baron*, a World War I air-combat simulator. Our own *Falcon 3.0* offers the ability to link up through a network and fly joint missions with as many as five other players.

Spectrum HoloByte is developing its simulation products from the ground up as multiplayer games. *Falcon 3.0* is the first in a series of simulations that allow multiple players to link up

ENTERTAINMENT: THE NEXT GENERATION

BY DARON STINNETT

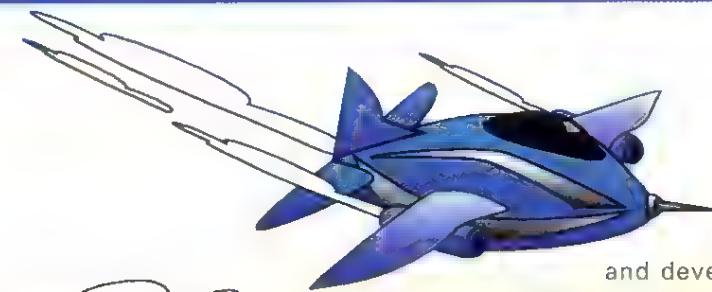
Starting with this issue's column, VG&CE gives the game industry a chance to speak out on pertinent issues. Each month, *Inside Gaming* will be a behind-the-scenes sounding board of what's taking place within the electronic-gaming community.

Rather than speculation written from the outside, it will be written by someone with knowledge from inside the business.

gave him the skills he would need to intercept and destroy any enemy aircraft that stray into his patrol area today. You're glad he's on board.

IT'S A TOUGH JOB, BUT SOMEONE'S GOTTA DO IT

If the above scenario sounds intriguing, you're in for a big surprise. In



through modem, direct connect or a LAN and participate in a common battle. This form of simulation is known as a *distributed* simulation because the systems supporting it—the individual vehicle simulations—may be distributed over local or large distances.

We first encountered this concept a few years back while developing an F-16 simulator for the Department of Defense. During the research for the project, we discovered a U.S. Army training facility called SimNet that allowed many individual M1-A1 tank simulators to be connected for group training exercises. The project has now advanced to the point where SimNet sites around the world can join in an ongoing training exercise on a single virtual battlefield. When we had a chance to try SimNet for ourselves, it was clear that a personal computer form of this system could have a tremendous impact on our simulations.

Thus was born the Electronic Battlefield System, Spectrum HoloByte's version of SimNet, and it offers a glimpse of where we'd like to see interactive gaming go. We've spent thousands of man-

hours researching and developing a communications protocol that will let anyone connect multiple simulations and eventually even simulations from other developers. Together, these products are laying the groundwork for the software that will be needed to drive large-scale, TV-based simulations.

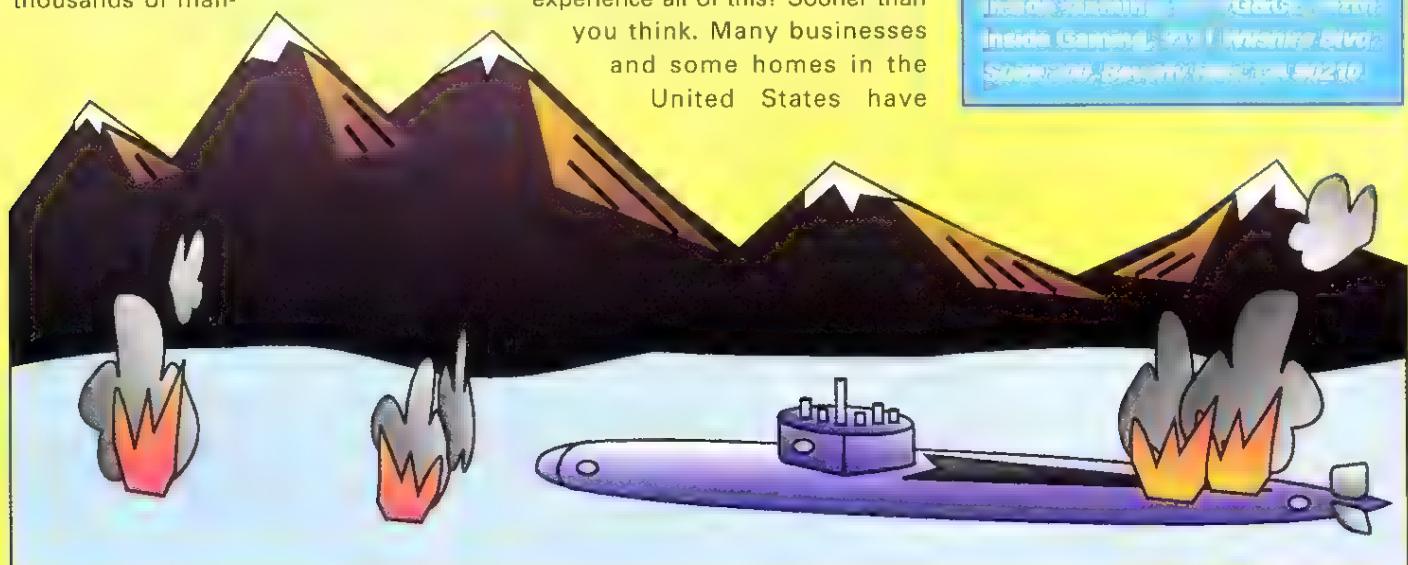
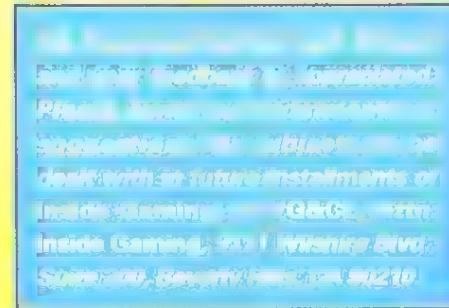
THE FUTURE IS NOW

While there's been plenty of talk about how home TV-based networks will let us shop, pay bills, scan the news and access video encyclopedias, very little has been said about their entertainment potential. An apt analogy could be made to the advent of radio and television: Both were envisioned, not as sources of entertainment, but as functional replacements for the telephone. As we all know, entertainment emerged as an overriding force behind each of these innovations. The same phenomenon will occur in the home-information arena: Interactive entertainment will become a normal part of everyday life, just as watching TV is now.

When will we have a chance to experience all of this? Sooner than you think. Many businesses and some homes in the United States have

already converted to digital phone lines. Within the year, we'll begin to see the home electronics needed to support this new form of entertainment. And the work being done in the area of interactive entertainment by companies such as Spectrum HoloByte, Sierra On-Line and GEnie means the software to drive the hardware is not far behind. Eventually, TV-based networking will spread worldwide, bringing a whole new twist to the futurist concept of the global village. And, once it begins, the gaming world will never be the same.

Daron Stinnett is a product manager for Spectrum HoloByte, where he oversees the research and development of all of the company's flight simulations and related products.



COMPUTER ILLUSTRATION BY DELORES ANDERSON

COMPUTER GAME

REVIEWS

Darkseed

CYBERDREAMS

Version: IBM PC (\$69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Anyone who has seen the *Alien* movies, read the comic book or simply watched television or read the newspaper is familiar with H.R. Giger's work. What most people don't realize is that the creature that terrorized Sigourney Weaver through three movies represents his more restrained artistry. Giger is at his best when combining biology and mechanical objects, making the dull-gray tone of his work far more horrifying than any bloodred-splattered game. Giger in fact would only allow his works to be transferred to computers in high-resolution mode (640 x 350).

In a story that borrows liberally from H.P. Lovecraft, the player assumes the role of science-fiction writer Mike Dawson (also the name of one of *Darkseed*'s designers), whose mission is essentially defined in the opening nightmare sequence: The ancient race of biomechanical creatures has surgically implanted an embryo in his brain that could facilitate its takeover of our world. As the embryo grows and Mike's headaches become more intense, he must find his way into the dark world and a way to defeat the creatures whose horror dwarfs that of his tweed jacket and cheezy mustache.

Atmosphere is key in *Darkseed*. The "normal world" scenes are tinted brown and framed by theater curtains and chis-

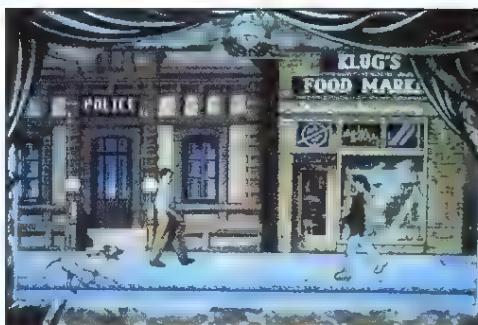
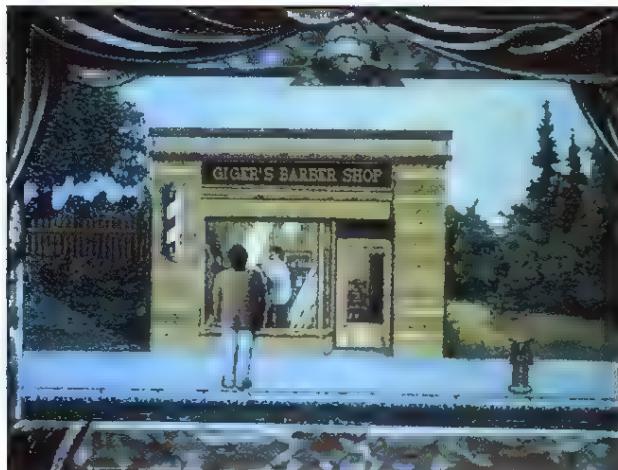
eled marble. The Dark World scenes appear as if they were shown on one of the ancient creatures' televisions. Even better, since the Dark World mirrors the normal world, every location in the normal world has an analogous one on the alien frontier, creating an artistic link that is key to the story. Gregory Apler's score is an appropriate mix of high-tech pop and soundtracks from vintage 1930s horror movies, which, thankfully, they didn't even attempt to replicate on a PC speaker. Those without sound boards are still treated to audible digitized voices and sound effects that are especially haunting without the music.

Darkseed's writers must have realized that a potential overkill of disturbing images might cause the player to view the game as camp, and they added the necessary humor to prevent this. Between the science-fiction in-jokes, graveyard humor and *Twin Peaks* style neighbors, one might almost forget that those large, gray sacks contain embryos—until they start moving.

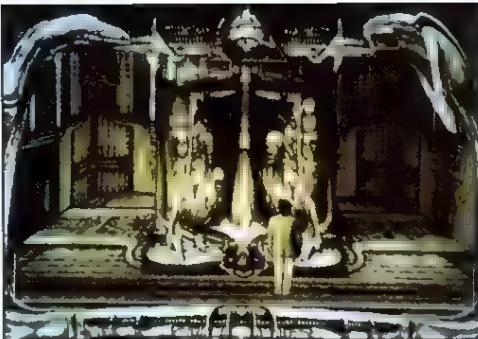
Darkseed may be an exceptional storyteller, but it is not quite as outstanding as a game. Because so much of the game concerns not what Mike Dawson is doing but what is happening to him, one would expect more directions, if not overbearing hand-holding. Instead, Mike is left to wander, trying to anticipate events at least 24 hours from the present. This freedom hints at a scenario with multiple endings, but, in that case, there should have been a flood of worthless actions—especially those that would not have required any additional art. The nightmares would have been perfect opportunities to foreshadow clues, but, instead, we get gratuitous transformation scenes.

Because the art is so encompassing, it is very difficult to tell parts of the puzzle from the background, making it necessary to run the pointer over most of the screen—a process that can be dreadfully slow on systems without a mouse. Otherwise, key items like bobby pins and levers would never be found. Like the multidirectional feel to the game play, some may find this obscurity to be atmospheric—but most will find it frustrating.

Building a story line around art is never easy, especially since animation and music are considered more important than the plot in too many adventures. Nevertheless,



Darkseed, by Cyberdreams, uses scanned paintings from Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger in approximately 50% of the game



atmosphere is the story line of *Darkseed*, and any nightmares caused by this occasionally frustrating game will be far less interesting than the biomechanical horrors living in a realm far too similar to our own.

—David S. Moskowitz

Merit Software
13635 Gamma Road
Dallas, TX 75244
(214) 385-2353

Mutant Beach

INLINE DESIGN

Version: Macintosh (\$59.95)

Sound/Music	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

An enchanting tropical blend of puzzle solving and animated antics, *Mutant Beach*, from Inline Design, is a beautifully drawn game. Native Nick, the player, is a carefree dude on a peaceful island with spirited reggae music and jungle sounds to keep him company. Hey, mon, this is the life! While out on his canoe catching some rays and maybe a fish for dinner, Nick finds a desperate message floating in a bottle.

"Help!" it reads, "The Jeweled Nose of the island's Great Stone Idol Mohawk has been stolen." With his nose more than out of joint, vengeful Mohawk has relinquished power over 12 troublesome idols who dwell in Idol City. No longer under Mohawk's influence, the idols have trans-



formed all of the villagers into stone mutants or other strange creatures. This is not good news for tourism!

As the only remaining human left on the atoll gone amok, Nick must race against the clock and locate specific items and spells strewn about the island. If he can figure out how to return the deified proboscis to Mohawk, the curse will be lifted. If time runs out, Nick can look forward to life as a mutant rock.

The quest begins on the Gate of the Isle. From this scenic starting point, Native Nick must first explore the island to find Idol City. Fortunately, Nick can schmooze with the neurotic idols, who are not above bribery. The idols provide Nick with hints—cryptic and straightforward—about which items will make them reveal their secrets. In return for the gifts, the idols give Nick spells and information about how to overcome other idols who stand in the way of returning the stolen Nose. But some idols are downright dangerous, so watch out!

Once Nick sort of knows (by process of elimination) what items to look for, he begins searching the island's three main sites. Making a map and a checklist of what the idols want is helpful, but leaving no stone unturned and exploring everywhere is crucial to winning.

Nevertheless, Nick's mission is not easy. The schizoid idols have sent mutated creatures, such as a froglike alligator, a daffy galosh-wearing vulture and other oddities, to "zonk" Nick and steal his stuff (i.e., things he picks up in the course of solving the mystery). These items are ordinary objects such as coconuts, bananas, grapes, rubber duckies and other stuff, which, if taken by a mutant, must be found all over again—a major bummer.

Because Mohawk has put a spell on all objects, the items Nick must find aren't visible on the screen. Players must use magic of their own to locate the items. How to get these special spells is part of figuring out the game. Talking to idol types wherever Nick encounters them provides useful hints. Nick can carry as many spells as he can find, but can hold only a few objects at a time. Deciding what to carry should be

based on what the idols want in exchange for clues.

Nick has some defenses against the thieving mutants. He can either get out of the way, duck or "bonk" a mutant, stunning it long enough for a getaway. If a mutant steals some of Nick's stuff, the item taken is, in most cases, precisely what Nick needed to give a specific idol. If Nick puts down an item or loses it to a mutant, he must scout the area where he first found the item to reclaim it.

Nick is controlled via the keyboard, numeric keypad, mouse or a combination of all three, with convenient keyboard equivalents for both right- and left-handed players. An unobtrusive information bar on the bottom of the screen includes status on stuff and magic spells, inventory, time remaining and a dialogue window for conversing with the idols.

Trouble in paradise? There's a lot of having Nick go back and forth, walking around, picking things up and putting them down—repetitive actions that may bug impatient players. A minor crackling noise sound glitch sometimes occurs when moving from one island scene to another or doing some activity, such as giving an item to an idol. When the game starts, the opening title screen says: "creating island." This may be misleading, as the island is always the same. *Mutant Beach* would be more involving and challenging if the island layout were different each time an island was "created."

The game is played in real time, meaning no other applications can run in the background while playing the game. Games can be saved for play later without penalty. Players can toggle from the default one-hour time limit to either a frenzied half-hour for puzzle mavens or a full 90 minutes—a feature most beginners will appreciate.

Mutant Beach is stellar on a 256-color monitor, which brings out the vibrant colors and subtle hues of the island. Nick can also cavort in black and white on a Mac Plus and in color on any Mac II or LC. Minimum requirements are System 6.07 or later, two megabytes of RAM and a

Pinball Dreams is the most startlingly accurate video translation of the pinball experience yet.



hard disk. The complex, four-channel stereo music soundtrack (System 7 required) is wasted on the Mac's measly internal speaker. Players with speedier machines, such as a Mac IIci with at least five megabytes of RAM, should plug a set of MacSpeaker compact speakers into the computer's audio jack for a sensational aural experience.

Mutant Beach is a breezy way to get marooned on a mysterious, faraway island without leaving the Mac desktop. Players saving the day in the "Nick" of time can say: Hey, mon, we are livin' it up pretty good now.

And that's no "idol" talk.

—Maxwell Eden

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Pinball Dreams

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SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Since the dawn of the home-video age, arcade operators have been beeping and squeaking about how home gaming was going to kill their business. Fortunately, the arcade apocalypse never fully came to pass—partly due to continually evolving technology and partly because the arcades are the last bastion of the gaming world—pinball machines.

Pinball is a 3-D exercise in immediate and tactile gratification and, therefore, is quite difficult to translate to video. The very nature of a free-rolling steel sphere offers infinite possibilities in game play, without all that tedious mucking about with hidden rooms and boss monsters. Where manipulating a joystick is as excit-



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ing as shaking hands, pinball is like a violent massage.

Now, 21st Century Entertainment, a European software house, has set up shop in the U.S. and has released its first smash hit—*Pinball Dreams*. Arcade operators finally have legitimate cause to tremble; *Pinball Dreams* is the most startlingly accurate video translation of the pinball experience yet. Everything from table design to ball physics has been faithfully recreated and crunched onto two disks, turning the humble Amiga into a full-fledged pinball simulator.

In keeping with the "dreams" portion of its title, *Pinball Dreams* features four different tables based on common flights of fancy: Ignition indulges the player with dreams of space travel; Steel Wheel is set in the railroad-buildin' days of the Old West; Beat-Box fuels fantasies of fame and fortune as a rock musician; and Nightmare beckons the player to spend a night in a creepy graveyard. Each table is distinctly different in both structure and skill level, but all are immensely playable. Nightmare's table, in fact, has been loosely "lifted" from Williams' mega-hit T2 pinball—with different graphics, of course. Each table has its own in-game music, along with sampled speech and sound effects. Game play is fast, furious and difficult to convey in words because pinball is, after all, pure action.

Either the mouse or cursor down arrow may be used to put the ball in play, while flippers are controlled by left and right **Shift**, **Alt** or **Amiga** keys. The tables scroll vertically to keep the ball in view, and tapping the space bar nudges the table, providing some English to the ball—though overly enthusiastic nudging will TILT the game. Scoring for one to eight players is kept on a simulated LED display at the top of the screen, along with the bonus awards and some clever graphic messages. The usual rules apply to all four tables—shoot the ramps, light the targets and flip the flippers—anything to keep the precious ball in play.

This is game playing in its purest form—with no level codes, hit points, roster disks or restart points. Like actual pinball, *Pinball Dreams* is deliriously addictive, and the urge to play "just one more game" is absolutely undeniable.

—Scott Wolf

21st Century Entertainment
P.O. Box 415
Webster, NY 14580
(716) 739-0998

Global Effect

MILLENNIUM

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

From Chris Crawford's *Balance of the Planet* to *SimEarth*, computer games have begun to incorporate environmental problems in their civilization simulations, which now include *Global Effect* from England's Millennium Software, a game that challenges the player to build an environmentally friendly civilization on an enormous, unpopulated world in any of 14 different scenarios.

These scenarios break down into three primary categories: Create a World, where players select one of nine planets, each with its own set of resources and trials (the ninth, "greenfield" world has its geology and resources determined by the player); Save a World from one of four environmental disasters within a limited time frame; and Rule a World, working against the industrial or military actions of a computer opponent. The Create a World scenarios offer the possibility of head-to-head play via data link, while the other scenarios are solitaire against the environment—or human player vs. computer player.

Game play is icon-driven, with 36 building icons ranging from city blocks to

power stations to trees. Players try to build cities that are well powered and serviced, but do not damage the environment too severely. Reporting the planet's health is done by eight different maps that record everything from pollution levels to global warming. These maps demonstrate *Effect's* strongest points—the interface is friendly and the graphics are excellent.



Global Effect is an attractive, ambitious game that seeks to address some real problems.





The first challenge, and possibly the toughest, is building the first city. Each scenario supplies a limited amount of power, which every action consumes. Spending must be balanced between services and power. Further complicating the matter is the tendency for cities to grow on their own, stretching power sources even further and sometimes blocking planned constructions. Overexpansion is the primary cause of complete exhaustion of the player's power—and a quick endgame.

Even when contained, power distribution within a city is difficult to maintain, and the documentation gives little or no information on why some power configurations are insufficient, which can lead to excessive player frustration.

Once the first cities are built and generating power, the player's position becomes quite strong, allowing more expensive items to be built, such as military complexes. Natural power (wind and solar) can be made more efficient and used to replace highly polluting fossil fuels. Once this is done, environmental problems diminish, with the exception of CO₂ and global warming, which are particularly difficult to combat (this reviewer carpeted half the planet with trees and still could not reverse the process). Once again, the documentation does not give an adequate explanation of what can be done to fight this.

The military part of *Global Effect* suffers from a poor integration into the temporal flow of the game. For example, a missile can take two game years to reach its target. Nuclear war causes contamination and prevents work in affected areas, but it doesn't appear to affect city expansion. It is a bizarre sight to see new cities pop up within a year or two on the site of a nuclear explosion, while, at the same time, it is impossible to rebuild power stations or services because the area is too contaminated.

In the end, *Global Effect* is an attractive, ambitious game that seeks to address some real problems. It is hampered, however, by insufficient documentation, imperfect integration of its various parts and inconsistencies in logic, as well as the lack



of an endgame option that would give a summation of the player's performance to that point before quitting. *Global Effect* is Millennium's first release in America, and it shows promise. Hopefully, future releases will be able to avoid the obstacles that prevent *Global Effect* from being as good as it could be.

—David Eadington

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San Mateo, CA 94404
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Aquaventura

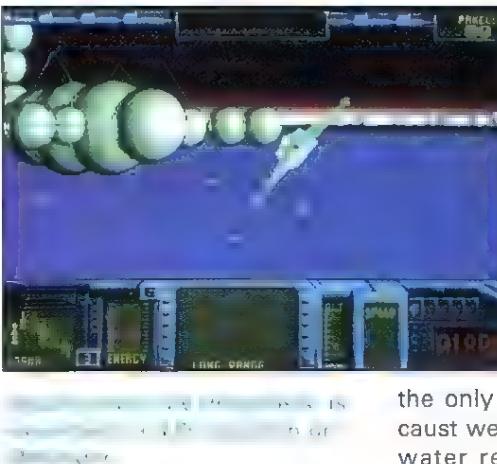
PSYGNOSIS

Version: Amiga (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I first saw *Aquaventura* when Psygnosis demonstrated it at the Summer CES about six years ago. As far as I know, it holds the record for the longest lag between announcement and ship date of any game. (It has also been a never-ending source of jokes for me to aim at Psygnosis.) The game I've been playing now doesn't much resemble what I saw at the CES so long ago, which was mostly an unfinished demo with what were, for the time, the most extraordinary graphics and animation I'd ever seen. Psygnosis ran into constant delays and technical difficulties that ultimately proved to be technical impossibilities. The project was shelved for several years and then revived as an almost completely different game. It isn't exactly what I expected, but it is a more than respectable addition to any arcade gamer's collection.

Aquaventura is essentially a 3-D variation on *Defender*. There have been other games based on the premise, but few that have done it better. It has the usual post-apocalyptic plot, which is set out in the manual with great wit. Unfortunately, the rest of the documentation isn't quite accurate, but the game is easy enough to figure out that you won't waste much time learning it. It seems that the only survivors after the nuclear holocaust were the inhabitants of eight underwater research labs, and, if the nukes



weren't bad enough, a bunch of marauding space aliens have taken over what little is left. The player flies around a landscape or, in this case, a waterscape, destroying panels that spawn enemy ships. There are other installations to blast into oblivion, too, and, finally, in typical Eurogame fashion, a super-nasty at the end of the level. Once you do that, you enter a water tunnel to the next level. This is classic arcade fare.

One of the biggest gripes I have with arcade games that involve flying or otherwise steering a fast-moving vehicle is that the programmers presume the player has the reflexes of a ten-year-old and has nothing else to do in life but practice their game. *Aquaventura* doesn't make that mistake; its control strikes exactly the right balance between speed (there are ten velocity settings) and maneuverability. I should note, though, that I encountered some jerkiness when I turned on my joystick's continuous fire; but that won't be a problem if you don't use one. The designers have included two different joystick control methods—a considerate touch. I didn't have much trouble getting through the first couple of levels of this moderately difficult game, and I expect I'll finish the game as soon as I can lock myself away for a Saturday.

Graphics and sound have always been what sets Psygnosis' games apart from the crowd, and *Aquaventura* is no exception. Still, while it's understandable given the setting, I do think the graphics are a little dark. I turned up the brightness on my monitor three times while I was playing, but had to give up when the color started washing out. The saturation should have been cranked up when the colors were darkened for atmosphere. The graphics are a combination of bitmaps and polygon objects, something that has become common recently. Your ship and some of the alien installations are polygons, but the alien ships and some other enemies are scaled, animated bitmaps that are brilliantly done. I'm particularly impressed with the end-of-level creatures—they're composed of spheres and must be blasted apart sphere by sphere.

Aquaventura isn't one of Psygnosis' best games, but then again, even Psygnosis' second-string games are miles beyond most others on the market. For sheer arcade pleasure, *Aquaventura* is a sure bet. I'm a little sad that it finally came out at all. Now what am I going to razz Psygnosis about?

—Tom Malcom

Psygnosis
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Brookline, MA 02146
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Crisis in the Kremlin

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Version: IBM PC (\$69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Crisis in the Kremlin is a game that makes you the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985. You begin the game by aligning with a political faction of the Communist party: hard-liners, reformists or nationalists, and, after that, it is up to you to follow your faction's political agenda. You not only have to keep the Soviet Union running, but improve it while keeping other political factions out of your way.

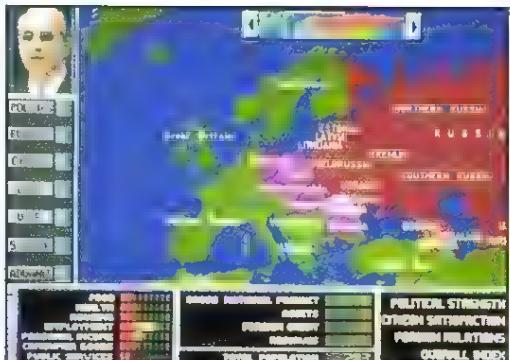
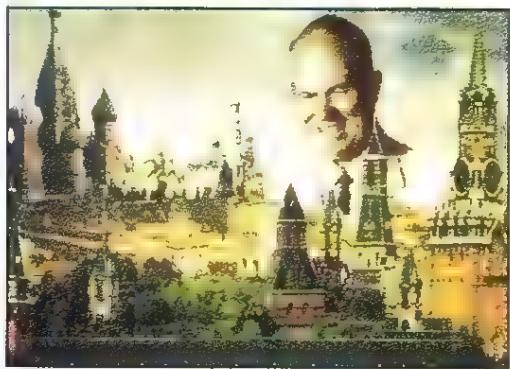
The hard-line faction wants to keep the traditional authoritarian regime. Reformists realize that there are problems with the old system's central authority but that there are some good things about the Soviet Union that shouldn't change. The nationalist faction believes in the establishment of political autonomy on the local level and an economic system based on free enterprise.

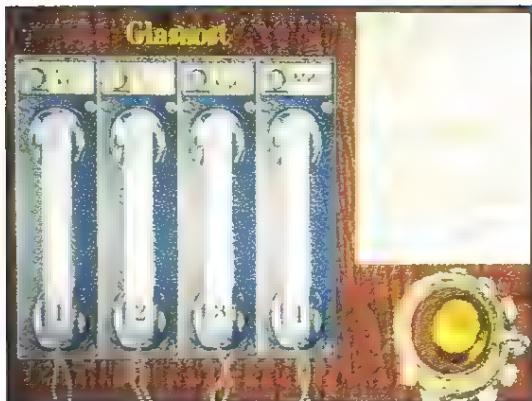
The game is a struggle between satisfying the other political factions and following the chosen political agenda. A successful player improves the country's economic performance, based on 40 items in the budget and ten types of policies. These factors also affect the countries of the Warsaw Pact and other Communist regimes.

Accomplishing all these goals is not easy. Even when things improve, a crisis might occur that will cost money and political power if not handled properly. Every year speeches stating the Soviet Union's policy are made and then backed up with appropriations in the Soviet budget. There is a limited amount of money to spend, so changing the budget becomes a compromise. If the policies followed improve the economy, there will be more money to spend on the following year's budget.

The game's interface is easy to use. To write a speech, simply go through the ten different policies ranging from style of government to the type of wage controls on workers' salaries. For each policy, there are different levels of severity to choose from.

In *Crisis in the Kremlin*, the gamer has to keep the Soviet Union from falling apart.





The budget can be manipulated on an item-by-item basis, or the entire budget can be cut or increased at once. All global changes in the budget are distributed pro rata among all of the items. It is very easy to follow all of the indicators and conditions of the world from the game screen. The screen is divided into eight different areas, each showing different information the player needs to follow about the Soviet Union. A click of the mouse will bring up more details about a selected item. From time to time, news reports from around the world will be shown in a small screen that pops up. Friends and ministers send other information that will help in decisions about the actions to take to improve the Soviet Union.

This game is a pure strategy game; there are no arcade sequences. The only animation comes from TV news clips from countries around the world. *Crisis in the Kremlin* is a game that has appeal to serious strategy players. The sound and graphics are nice but don't affect game play. Players will probably turn off features like viewing news stories and receiving letters, especially after playing the game a few times.

—John Schnyder

Spectrum Holobyte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 522-3584

Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited, by Accolade, is one of the few driving simulators to detail the aspects of the Formula One cars.

Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited

ACCOLADE

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This year promises the release of several new driving simulators from various developers, and among the first to arrive is Accolade's *Road & Track Presents Grand Prix Unlimited*, a partly realistic look into the rigors of Formula One racing.

Grand Prix Unlimited offers the player three choices upon initial boot up: race in World Championship, race a single track or try being the architect of a course. However you look at it, you're either racing or building.

The driving aspect varies little from previous simulators, except for the customization of each of the five cars given. These adjustments may be made in several categories, including the view level, brake action, radius-steering, wings (airfoil), tires and gears. By careful adjusting for each track, you'll tailor the individual car to perform best on tracks with tight turns or those with long straightaways, including optimum performance settings for the various weather conditions provided within the game. For instance, setting the tires to heavy treads allows for the best grip on wet surfaces, while proving to be more of a hindrance on dry surfaces. Though making subtle adjustments for each car certainly sounds challenging, it all really boils down to common sense (and a proper understanding of the manual).

The actual driving proved to be somewhat difficult, even when using the optional joystick. As flight simulator buffs



would know, the keyboard is not the best input device for precision flying (or driving, for that matter). Though the joystick yields much better results, I was disappointed to find out that neither of the fire buttons are used for acceleration or braking: Not only must you steer left and right, but you must push forward to simulate the gas pedal and pull back to brake. Driving would be a lot more efficient if the player only had to contend with moving left and right, while keeping a button pressed. The route *Grand Prix Unlimited* took was certainly not the best use of the joystick—and a waste of the buttons as well.

The course design, something Accolade is well known for in its games, allows the unlimited construction of any number of racetracks. Using simulated blueprints, track pieces are placed on a simulated grid, and the option to add scenery such as buildings or signs is given. Numerous track pieces are available, and the unlimited construction of racetracks allows for player experimentation beyond the tracks provided.

An instant-replay feature is also available to assess performance and to watch those nasty crashes. Chances are, you'll be using it to watch the latter from every possible angle and degree of zoom.

Graphics are appropriately drawn, and graphic speed remains relatively high, especially with the variable detail setting. Faster systems will enjoy a new sense of driving realism, and you'll get a real kick out of the gently sloping hills that will get a few "oohs" and "ahs" from those who have experienced hitting dips in roads.

The ongoing soundtrack, though catchy at first, becomes a real bother during extended plays. Fortunately, the option to disable the music is present. Unfortunately, the sound effects are mediocre at best, and the engine hum sounds more like a muffled soprano than the rumbling sounds of a 500-horsepower Formula One engine.

While *Grand Prix Unlimited* is one of the few driving simulators to detail the aspects of the Formula One cars, it proves to be more of an arcade-game experience than one of detailed simulation. There is no managing of team funds or replacement of broken parts; instead, the focus is on the driving aspect of Formula One, and it is achieved with average success. For



pure enjoyment of driving at high speeds, *Grand Prix Unlimited* fits the bill; but a step out of the mold of traditional racing, providing something beyond visual appeal and fast graphics, would have been necessary to set this game apart from the rest.

—Danny Han

Accolade
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San Jose, CA 95129
(408) 985-1700

Gateway

LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Back in the mid-1980s, Frederik Pohl, a renowned science-fiction author, published a book called *Gateway*. The book got its name from an abandoned alien space station that berthed hundreds of alien ships, each of which was preprogrammed to reach a specific, unknown destination.

Pilots, looking for fame and fortune, volunteered to ride the ships to their unknown destinations in search of Heechee (the name given to the aliens) artifacts. Some pilots returned with priceless cargo; some returned with nothing; some returned not at all.

If this story line sounds intriguing, you'll be glad to know that Legend Entertainment has released a computer game based on Pohl's fascinating story. Fans of the Heechee saga (which has grown to include several sequels) can now climb aboard the strange alien crafts and take their chances in the cosmos. And, in this graphic adventure, you'll not only go in search of artifacts, but also discover a terrible Heechee secret.

Unfortunately, as an adventure game, *Gateway* is a bit behind the times. When

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INFORMATION ON YOUR MISSION

It's your first day at Department P, Moscow KGB and you can't help but think that whoever arranged for your transfer here either has a strange sense of humor or hates your guts. Despite all the upheaval in the Soviet government in recent years, the KGB, or Committee for State Security, is still the most feared and pervasive intelligence-gathering network in the world. Only now the KGB itself is under secret surveillance - by you! Questions lead to more questions but one thing is clear - the KGB reeks of corruption and you must act quickly and shrewdly to uncover the conspirators before they uncover you.

FEATURES:

- * Movie-like storyline filled with surprising twists and intrigue
- * Intuitive icon-based interface -
- * Intuitive icon-based interface -
- * Intuitive icon-based interface -
- * VCR-style "REWIND" option for keeping track of important clues and information

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you first load it, you won't be greeted with the usual point-and-click, iconic interface so popular in adventure games these days. Although a mouse is fully supported, *Gateway* is really an old-fashioned text adventure to which a graphic window has been added. If you like, you can use your mouse to click on words in a word list in order to form commands. However, this type of input is clumsy, and anyone with even limited keyboard skills will likely choose to type commands.

This isn't to say that a mouse isn't useful. To explore your current location, you can click on items in the graphics window in order to get their descriptions, which is much more convenient than typing a slew of "look" commands. Also, several on-screen buttons give you quick mouse access to such commands as Inventory, Status and Help. Nevertheless, for most of the game, you can expect to hunch over your keyboard, typing commands like INSERT THE CARD INTO THE PV, PUT ON THE SPACESUIT and PICK UP THE BOOK.

A little over a quarter of the screen is dedicated to the picture depicting your current location. The graphics are not elaborate. Still, they are well rendered and add much to the game. The remainder of the screen holds the list of verbs and nouns you can use and the aforementioned command buttons. In addition, possible exits from your current location are shown on a compass readout near the top of the screen.

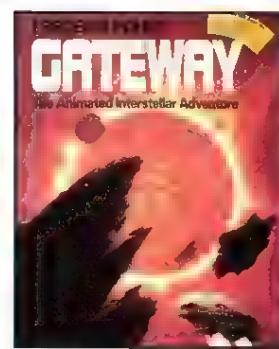
The picture window is not the extent of this game's graphic goodies, however. At various points in the game, you'll be treated to full-screen images, as well as several animated sequences. The full-screen images include awe-inspiring space scenes and close-up views of terminals and notebook computers. The terminals and computers include on-screen controls that you use to operate them. For example, in your quarters, you can use your terminal to read mail, review news events, check your accounts or read through a bulletin-board style message base.

In spite of its dated interface, *Gateway* manages to be an engrossing game. This is mostly due to the excellent writing and the care that was taken to mold a story that is believable and intriguing. From your arrival at *Gateway* to your first flights in a Heechee spacecraft through each of your intergalactic adventures, you'll be glued to the story, always anxious to see what comes next.

The puzzles are not too difficult, which helps the player to retain a sense of the story, rather than become obsessed with trying every combination of commands he can think of. Still, novice adventurers will find much to keep them busy. Advanced adventurers will likely breeze through the game. (For those who need help, *Gateway's* introductory offer package includes a hint book, complete

with a foreword by Frederik Pohl.)

One fairly serious bug in the current shipment of games makes it impossible to complete the adventure without knowing the work-around. (If you're having



trouble using a certain button, try this: Leave the armory, go to room T20 and save the game and quit. Then, restart the game from the beginning, without restoring the last save. When the game starts, and you're in your quarters, restore the game you saved. You should now be able to press the button.) A less serious bug, which afflicts players using a sound board, causes the game to lock up temporarily for as much as a couple of minutes. A work-around for this bug is included with the game. Legend is, of course, preparing an updated version of the game.

Gateway may not represent the state of the art in computer adventuring, but it's a fine game nevertheless. Fans of Pohl's books or folks who have a hankering to discover the mysteries of the galaxies will enjoy this well-crafted adventure.

—Clayton Walnum

Legend Entertainment
14200 Park Meadow Drive
Chantilly, VA 22021
(703) 222-8500

Gods

KONAMI

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Using the name *Gods* must have been a difficult decision for the Bitmap Brothers. It would attract attention from any potential purchaser who would immediately fantasize about the possibilities: *Populous* with politics? A mass cross-mythological adventure game? A strategic battle between Olympus and the Titans? No, *Gods* is none of those, only a computer version of the jump-and-shoot style games flooding the 8- and 16-bit cartridge markets. A highly proficient and attractive game, but an unoriginal one nevertheless.

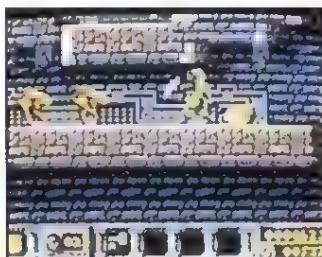
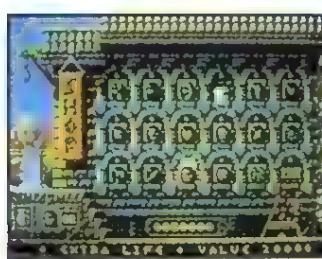
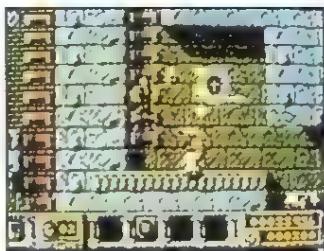
Assuming the role of a hero brash enough to demand deification upon completion of the task (Greek Mythology alone is full of applicable candidates, such as Heracles, Theseus and Bellerophon), the player is sent to clean out the holy citadel, which has been taken over by four great guardians (boss monsters).

In the Amiga version, passwords are revealed after every world, while the IBM version only reveals the codes at the end of every level. The natural consequence is that Amiga players will be able to finish the game a bit sooner than their playing proficiency might allow, while IBM users might be facing more repetition than they can stomach.

Even the most skilled players will not be able to succeed by jumping and killing alone. Often, a necessary prize is hidden in a fatal trap and must first be stolen by a thief, whom the player must then defeat over safe territory in order to retrieve the prize. In addition to thieves, killers and fliers (winged killers) also roam the citadel.

Gods has a few features that most cartridge jump-and-shoots lack. The first is that players take damage from any fall greater than the normal distance between two "steps." The other is the "shop." Containing food, weapons, potions, magic spells, extra men and special directional adjustments for weapons fire (i.e., select normal, intense or wide arcs), shops are

Konami's
Gods has a
few features
that most
cartridge
jump-and
shoot games
lack



found at the beginning of every level and at the end of each world. Players must be careful to select weapons that do not cancel each other out. For example, the hero may fire off as many fireballs and axes as he can afford, but the purchase of a single dagger will remove all axes from the inventory.

Though a joystick option is available, *Gods* is extremely keyboard friendly, requiring only the four basic directional keys and the space bar. To pick up or drop items, the player must kneel and select the proper item with the space bar. However, this makes it nearly impossible to pick up any automatically activated item (e.g., potions, weapons and food) without setting it off.

The Bitmap Brothers did make some effort to give *Gods* a different visual effect from the cartridge clones. Even with their goofy grins and notoriously bad backs, villains are blissfully free of cute. And a helmet covers the well-muscled hero's face, giving the impression that he is doomed, much the same as the hockey masks in *Splatterhouse*. Nevertheless, instead of every death covering the screen with blood, ghostly screaming faces or mushroom-cloud explosions erupt from the destruction, giving *Gods* the needed magical atmosphere. Similarly, the background stones genuinely look as roughly hewn as the pillars are smoothly polished. Sound effects are sparse, but the hero's steps echo gloomily from the speakers, and Nation XII's opening theme music is exceptional but regrettably absent from play.

Gods may only be a glorified jump-and-shoot game, but, considering that the computer software market does not have the video-game glut of such clones, this atmospheric arcade simulation is a welcome release.

—David S. Moskowitz

Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5111

Hong Kong Mahjong Pro

NINE DRAGONS SOFTWARE
Version: IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Hong Kong Mahjong Pro, created by Julian Robert Fitch for Nine Dragons Software, successfully simulates the progression of a real game. Played avidly in Hong Kong and Japan, where the Japan Mahjong Association monitors its standards, mahjong resembles the card game we know as gin rummy. Precise rules and scoring complexities, as well as a monetary incentive (mahjong exists as a legal form of gambling), animate this game of luck and strategy.

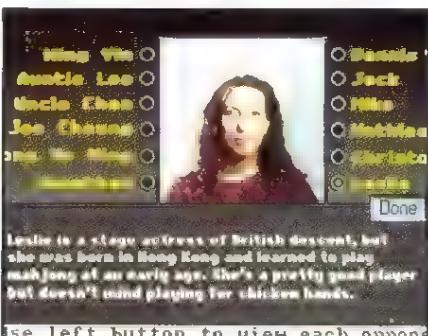
Produced by Electronic Arts, *Hong Kong Mahjong Pro* uses tile graphics identical to Activision's 1986 version of *Shanghai*, a simpler, single-screen table game. Observation and memory facilitate success as four players (three of them computer opponents) stack 144 tiles into a square wall. Alternately choosing and discarding from a hand of 13 colored tiles, the adversaries' race to collect a complete hand progresses counterclockwise around a mahjong table viewed from overhead. Each participant automatically receives a tile from the computer, unless he secures a desired tile discarded to the table. Players must react quickly; the option to choose a tile exists for a short time and only when it can be incorporated immediately into a set. Sets include Chow (three same-suited tiles in numerical order), Pong (three identical tiles), Kong (four of the same tiles) and Win, which can be a matching pair. The first player to assemble this arrangement wins the hand and collects chips from the others. Interim sequences feature winners' reactions, such as Wing Yin clapping her hands. Christopher looks down and shakes his head in dejection when his discard becomes the winning tile. After a minimum of 16 hands of East, South, West and North rounds, the final victor emerges.

Opponents' skill levels, scoring complexities and the speed of play provide the challenges. Three of 12 opponents, including Jack, a married computer salesman from Hackensack,

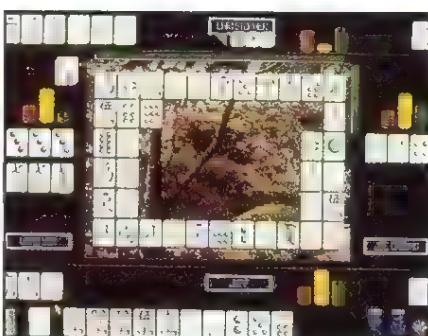
Hong Kong Mahjong Pro offers an abundance of challenging and authentic game combinations



Use left button to view each opponent



Use left button to view each opponent



New Jersey, with 1.5 children, and Christopher, an average but unfocused player from Los Angeles, may be chosen. Don't expect to outwit the expert players often. Increasing play speed decreases active tile life, the major variable of challenge. Scoring comprehension comes with experience and patient attention to the "scoring review" and "tutorial lessons." Its complexity results from the many conditions and rules of execution. The tutorial program provides a lesson on rules and scoring, a demo game and the option of playing a Novice game, which features play-by-play assistance from the Mahjong Sparrow. During regular play, the sparrow can always be asked for advice on which tile to discard.

Colored playing tiles in suits of numerical characters, sticks and balls and the painted winds, dragons and flowers provide a detailed depiction of authentic mahjong tiles found in Kowloon. Scrolling credit and interim sequences fall flat as a result of limited resolution and a two-dimensional presentation. The music, created by David Covett, is monotonous and tinny—typical computer-generated music. Luckily, the player has the option of turning it off. The sound effects are nothing special, but they do help pace the game.

For those who already know the game of mahjong or are patient enough to learn its complex subtleties, *Hong Kong Mahjong Pro* offers an abundance of challenging and authentic game combinations.

—Lisa Armstrong

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
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(415) 572-ARTS

Wolfenstein 3-D

ID SOFTWARE
Version: IBM PC (\$35 for missions 1-3; \$50 for missions 1-6)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Anyone who has ever played on an Apple II probably remembers *Castle Wolfenstein* and its sequel *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*. The arcade adventure game featured a captured American soldier who, having wrested a gun from his Nazi jailers, tries to escape the Teutonic

castle with his life and the plans for a secret attack on the Allied forces. Digitized screams of agony and "kaput" made it as technologically advanced as it was playable. The game was eventually translated for the IBM PC, but nobody had ever attempted to take advantage of the IBM's graphics, sound and processing speed. However, Id Software has completely re-created the game, and the full-color *Wolfenstein 3-D* is as good now as the black-and-white classic was in the early '80s.

Assuming the role of William J. "BJ" Blackowicz, an Arayan-looking American spy who has survived an encounter with the "SS Dentist/Mechanic," the player searches for revenge, stolen art treasures and Dr. Schabbs, who has developed a technique that will make armies of the dead.

Before playing *Wolfenstein 3-D*, it might be a good idea to say to yourself ten times, "This is shareware," or else you'll never believe it. The stunning color graphics and animation are far superior to anything else Apogee has distributed. *Wolfenstein* offers what at least looks like 360° rotation at all locations, and the walls zoom in and out faster than just about anything around—including *Ultima Underground*. The game moves so quickly that a small percentage of those playing it have reported problems with motion sickness. (Note: Those with older, slower PCs can shrink the viewing screen and greatly increase the speed.)

The music begins as a quirky *Mission Impossible* type theme and becomes progressively more stark and simple as the levels get more deadly. Not every sound effect is supported on every soundboard, but *Wolfenstein 3-D* does support



the essentially orphaned Disney Sound Source. *Castle Wolfenstein* was noteworthy for its violence, as corpses generally littered the screen by endgame, and this version is no different. Instead of a mess of white dots, corpses now look like corpses, complete with pools of blood. The German shepherds die especially gracefully. And in case anyone starts to sympathize with the captors, the castle is filled with the skeletons of previous prisoners, some of them still hanging as if ready for another torture session. Id was aware of the possible impact of such graphic content, so it rated the game "PC-13" (profound carnage).

The only legitimate complaint about the game is that, in spite of its technological advances, it lacks some of the complexities of the older games. The new *Wolfenstein* has no grenades, uniforms or bulletproof vests, so anyone who enjoyed the ultimate sick pleasure of holding an SS officer at gunpoint, stealing his bulletproof vest, then shooting him will have to be content to watch the blue-suited soldiers of the Reich die just like everyone else. (Another great trick was holding an officer at bay with an empty gun, stealing his bullets, then shooting him with them.) Also, while secret passages in an arcade game are time consuming, finding them is not essential to completion of most levels.

Wolfenstein 3-D is fast, violent, brutal and flashy—everything essential to be a worthy successor to the original *Castle Wolfenstein* games. Almost single-handedly justifying the existence of shareware, *Wolfenstein 3-D* has proven that games don't need CD technology, two megabytes of RAM or a million-dollar marketing department to be the best available—at any price.

—David S. Moskowitz
Apogee
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Welcome to the first installment of *Q & A*. Every month, this column will answer any questions related to electronic gaming—except those that belong in *Tip Sheet*. This means not only your technical questions, but everything from what's going on in foreign markets to what the designer of your favorite game is currently working on.



I just bought an Atari Lynx a few days ago. It's a great system, and, in my opinion, it is better than Sega's Game Gear. What's the low-down on the Lynx's capabilities? The graphics are great, but the sounds are...not so great. What kind of processors does it have?

—Melvin Taylor
Charlottesville, Virginia



I just started reading your magazine and love it. I have a question:

I just got a new game for my NES (*Deathbots*, by American Video) and the instruction book said, "Should you encounter any problems with this cartridge, two important questions must be asked: a) Was your Nintendo control deck purchased after October 1990? and b) Does your cartridge play on other control decks purchased prior to October 1990?" To make my question clear, what's going on with this? Should we take our NESes apart?

—Joseph Shake
St. Louis, Missouri



In October 1990, Nintendo secretly reconfigured its basic NES units. This meant that all of its licensees would still sell games that would work in either system, but unlicensed companies, like American Video, would unknowingly produce carts unusable on new NES systems. You don't have to take your NES apart, and, if you call American Video at (800) HOT-4AVE, they will send you an upgrade kit at no charge that will allow you to play all of their incompatible carts.



I would like to ask you a question about my computer: What happened to it? I had high expectations when I bought my Apple IIgs a few years back, but, as time progressed, I lost faith in it. The Apple IIgs is supposed to be one of the best

computers around, isn't it? Here in New York, and everywhere, it is very difficult to find software for the IIgs. I go into a software store and there are a couple of shelves of Apple II software and the rest is filled with IBM PC software.

I want to know if a modem would increase my chances of getting more software. Because of the little software I own, I had to go to Los Angeles to buy. Of the few programs I have for the IIgs though, most of them are excellent. For example, *Word Perfect* for the IIgs is the best word processor I have come across for my computer.

Also, do you know anything about the Z-80 card for the IIgs? What kind of applications can you run with this card? Can you run software developed on the IBM PC with the Z-80 card? If that is possible, I would be totally flabbergasted.

—John Plomaritis
Brooklyn, New York

A Introduced when the market was already divided among the IBM PC clones, Macintosh and Amiga, the IIgs was hindered by bad timing and the limitations of the already outdated Apple II series. A modem, however, would help you access America On-Line, which has numerous bulletin boards, forums and services—some carrying shareware games and info on purchasing others—all supporting the Apple II series. You should contact America On-Line at (703) 448-8700.

Applied Engineering makes a Z-80 card for the Apple IIgs, but it won't allow you to run IBM PC or Amiga software, only that designed for the Apple CPM. For more information, call Applied Engineering at (214) 241-6060.



The Lynx actually has two sets of processing chips, which divide game playing tasks to maximize efficiency. The first is called Mikey, which is a 16-bit custom CMOS with the following components: a Motorola 65C02 processor running at 4 MHz; the sound engine, which allows four-channel stereo sound; a video DMA driver for LCD display; system timers; interrupt controller; UART (for ComLynx) and 512 bytes of bootstrap and game-card loading ROM.

The second is called Suzy, which is also a 16-bit custom CMOS chip running at 16 MHz. Suzy contains the Blitter (bitmap block transfer) unit; a main graphics engine, which allows unlimited number of high-speed sprites (animated figures) with collision detection; high-speed sprite scaling, distortion and tilting effects; multidirectional scrolling; variable frame rate (up to 60 frames per second); 4096 color palette with 16 colors usable simultaneously; and the math coprocessor. Technical enough for you?



I have two questions about the Genesis.

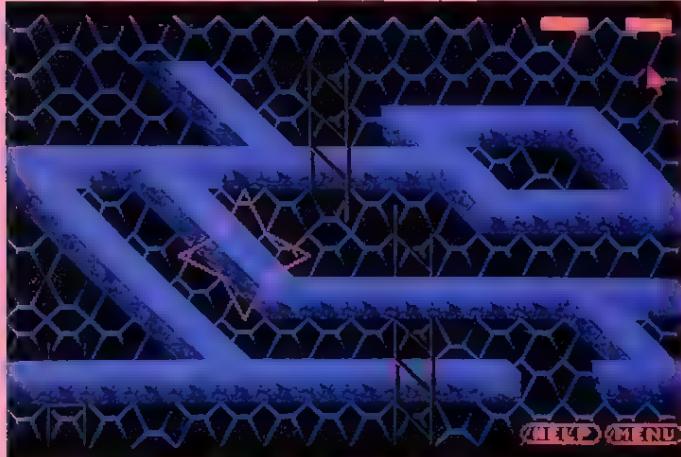
1) How many controllers can the Genesis handle?

2) What is the ext. port on the back for?

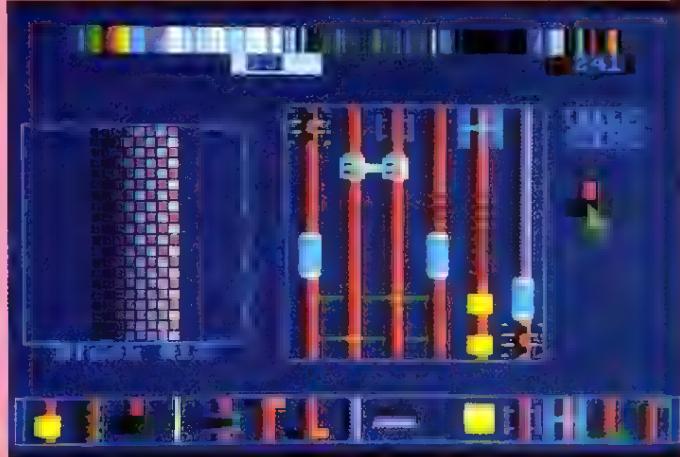
Also, I have another question: Between the Super NES and the Genesis, which is your personal favorite?

—Byron Thibodeaux
Harvest, Alabama

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The Sega Genesis can only handle two controllers, which is all it needs. The ext. port was for the TeleGenesis modem, which would have allowed players to play over the phone. Technical problems plagued the modem and Sega never released it. As for your final question, you told us that you only had two queries, and the third one caught us so off guard, we're too stunned to answer it.



I own a Nintendo [Entertainment System], a Commodore 64, an IBM PC compatible and two Atari systems. I am planning on purchasing a Sega 16-bit system, but first I'd like to ask about Sega's future CD player: Will it be compatible with the Japanese Mega Drive? This is important, after reading the last issue where you described cartridge compatibility. I'd also like to know if Psygnosis has any plans for the Genesis format.

Another question that's been bothering me is related to NEC (TTI). NEC has a number of systems that have slightly different specifications. But it seems that they all are at least compatible with smaller systems' games. So, is the TurboGrafx-16 or Turbo-Express compatible with any PC Engine games? Is the SuperGrafx compatible with any TG-16 games?

Now that Nintendo licensees are allowed to manufacture their own games, do you think that we will see any of the rumored technology dealing with the small, 8-bit processor in the carts to boost graphics? This just might save the market, if the prices are reasonable.

There is also rumored to be an IBM PC compatible peripheral for the Genesis. If you've heard anything about it, do you know if an IBM PC will work with the CD-ROM drive? If so, it means a Sega CD-ROM drive for \$200 will save us all money on CD-ROMs over the high prices of IBM PC compatible drives (\$400-\$1,000).

—Jon Keller
Northeast Pennsylvania



What NEC (TTI) really needs is somebody to give its products better names so all of this is self-evident, but

here we go. The TG-16 is the American version of the Japanese PC Engine and can run all PC Engine games with a special adapter. The SuperGrafx is an advanced version of the PC Engine and does run PC Engine games, but was never released in the United States.

Word from Sega is that games for the American Sega CD will not be compatible with the Japanese Mega-CD. You are able to fit the Mega-CD player with a Genesis, but, when the units are turned on, the message "Error! This is an NTSC-compatible Mega-CD for exclusive use in Japan and Southeast Asia" appears. The reason Sega has done this is that licenses for certain games are given on a regional basis. A game that is licensed in Japan by one particular software company might be licensed by another in the U.S.

The Sega Teradrive is the Japanese mating of the Mega Drive, Mega-CD and an IBM-compatible PC, but Sega of America has no plans to release it in the States. Also, the Sega CD player will not be compatible with IBM PCs, and Psygnosis has no plans at this time for the Genesis either.

None of us have heard anything about rumored 8-bit technology, but games like Sunsoft's *Batman: The Return of the Joker* are helping to prove that the NES isn't the dinosaur the 16-bit manufacturers would like us to believe.



I'm having trouble with the game *Quarterstaff*, by Infocom. I would be most grateful if you could give me information on where I could obtain a clue book, tips or a help line number.

—Brian Smith
Costa Mesa, California



Activision has purchased all titles in the Infocom line, and you may obtain hint books by sending a \$2 check or money order for each book to: Activision, Attn: Terrence Russell, P.O. Box 67001, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

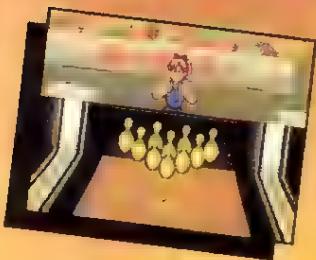
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